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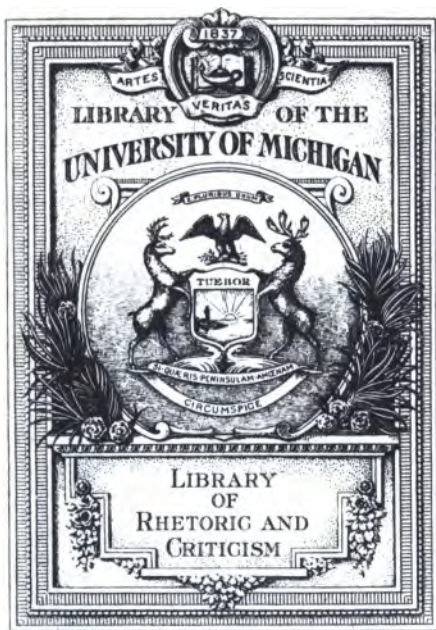
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Sidney Lanier.

O golden legend writ in the skies!

I turn toward you with longing soul,
And list to the awful harmonies
Of the spheres as on they roll.

THE bearer of an evangel of truth and beauty to the world may ever expect a tardy acceptance of his mission. "For he is an embodied ideal sent into the world to rebuke its commonplace aims, and to leaven its dull, brute mass," and his rich and fragrant influences are too often shed upon "souls long confined in indolent conventions." Not unfrequently he is made to sigh with the German poet:

O! for all I have suffered and striven,
Care has embittered my cup and my feast;
But here is the night and the dark-blue heaven,
And my soul shall be at rest.

Sidney Lanier.

For the world deals strangely with its poets. They come so seldom and in such ever new and changed garb that oftentimes only the saving remnant recognizes their existence. Sometimes, too, the poet's life is strangely at variance with his message, and the world satisfies its dull self-complacency by simply telling the "truth" about him.

But here is one whose beauty of personality is no whit inferior to the loftiness and worth of his message. He was a spotless, sunny-souled, hard-working, divinely gifted man, who had exalted ideas both of art and of life, and he

Lived and sang that life and song

Might each express the other's all,
Careless if life or art were long,

Since both were one, to stand or fall.

So that the wonder struck the crowd,

Who shouted it about the land;

His song was only living aloud,

His work a singing with his hand.

But the shout was raised after he
was called away. During his life-

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time he was left to the accumulated ills of poverty, neglect, disease, and premature death. "Better late than never" is a good old adage, and it is well to consider that Sidney Lanier is already generally recognized as the most distinctive figure in our literature since the famous group of New England poets passed away, and that many are already claiming for him the right to rank among the few genuine poets of America.

The story of his personality and work, though pathetic, is one of the most interesting and inspiring in the biographical annals of men of letters. Sidney Lanier sprang from a Huguenot family, the founder of which, on English soil, was Jerome Lanier, who emigrated with his family to England in the latter part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth and obtained employment in her household service. It is probable that he was a musical composer and shared in the production of those

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musical dramas and masques which "so did take Eliza and our James." Between the years 1568 and 1666 ten Laniers flourished in England, enjoying the favor of four consecutive English monarchs.

Nicholas Lanier, son of Jerome, received, as painter, engraver, "master of the king's music," and diplomatist, the encouragement of James I. and the friendship of Charles I. During the reign of James I. he set to music two of Ben Jonson's masques, "The Vision of Delight," and the "Masque of Lethe;" and in the time of Charles I. his name is associated with that of Henry Lawes, the composer of the songs for Milton's "Comus." This Nicholas was a friend of Van Dyck, who painted his portrait. His son, also named Nicholas, was much in favor with Charles II. He too was a lover of pictures, as was his father and an Uncle Jerome, who had a fine collection at Greenwich, the home of

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the Laniers for several generations. But he was still more interested in music, and, uniting with a number of other persons, including four additional Laniers, he obtained the renewal of a charter for the Society of Musicians, in which he was appointed First Marshal or President for life, with the determination to "exert their authority for the improvement of the science and the interest of its professors." One of the other four was John Lanier, very likely father of the Sir John Lanier who fought as major general at the battle of the Boyne, and fell gloriously at Steinkirk, along with the brave Douglas.

The first Lanier to come to America was Thomas, in 1716, who settled with other colonists on a grant of land ten miles square, which included the site of the present city of Richmond, Va. A descendant of his by the same name married an aunt of George Washington, and

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the family furnished many honored citizens to the colony and the state. "Again and again the strain of artist's blood has shown itself among them." At present the name is very common in the South.

It is not stated when Sidney's grandfather moved to Georgia, but his father, Mr. Robert S. Lanier, was born there, and after receiving a fair education at a manual labor school, and later at Randolph-Macon College, in Virginia, he became a lawyer, married Miss Mary J. Anderson, of Virginia, whose family supplied members of the House of Burgesses in more than one generation and was gifted in poetry, music, and oratory, and returned to his native state to begin the practice of his profession. He possessed a taste for reading, and accumulated miscellaneous books faster than clients. But his wife's Scotch thrift and his own industry enabled them to live comfortably, if narrowly.

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Their first child was born February 3, 1842, on High Street, in Macon, Ga., and named Sidney. Another son, Clifford, and a daughter completed the number. The house stands now nearly as then, on a commanding ridge from which the ground falls rapidly away in three directions, affording many picturesque views from its windows. Near by were happy hunting grounds where the two brothers—loving and inseparable companions from childhood—sought hickory nuts, scaly barks, and haw apples, or hunted doves, blackbirds, robins, plover, snipe, squirrels, and rabbits, according to season and inclination. In such excursions, though Sidney's tastes often pronounced in favor of quiet angling for fish in the placid Ocmulgee, he doubtless imbibed the Wordsworthian love of natural things which has found intense expression in many of his latest poems.

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His fondness for reading showed itself early, and much of his play-time was spent in the office of his father, adjoining the house, where the family library was kept. But, even at this early age, his passion was music. When he was only a few years old Santa Claus brought him a small, yellow, one-keyed, flageoletlike flute, on which simple instrument he would practice with the passion of a *virtuoso*. Still earlier he had displayed aptitude for music by beating on the bones (such as negro minstrels use) jigs, strathspeys, and dance tunes in accompaniment to the piano playing of his mother. He never received any musical instruction beyond the teaching of the notes to him by his mother, yet at an early age he could play on almost any instrument—flute, piano, guitar, banjo, violin, organ, etc. He says in a letter: "I could play passably well on several instruments before I could write

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legibly, and since then the very deepest of my life has been filled with music." At this time his boyish delight found expression either as leader of a children's amateur minstrel band, or, a little later, as captain of a boys' military company, armed with bows and arrows, a result of "Froissart" and "Chronicles of the English Bowmen." But his first impulse was ever to form an amateur orchestra of children, of schoolboys, of fellow-soldiers in camp, and he finally became first flutist of the Peabody Orchestra in Baltimore.

In disposition and character, as in gifts and aptitudes, the child was also father to the man. His high-spirited fearlessness was admirably tempered with amiability and a kind of chivalry, even for one so young, and his little friends (he always exhibited a special capacity for friendship) were somehow impressed with his distinction, or, at any rate, with

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a feeling of his original personality.

The year before he entered college it was deemed best to give him a "taste" of business, and for about a year he was general delivery clerk in the Macon post office. From a boy he had a deep sense of humor and a keen eye for character, and this situation afforded a fine opportunity for their natural growth and enlargement. At the supper table he would keep the family in a roar by mimicry of the funny speech of the Middle Georgia Crackers, the country people applying for letters. Later in his writings, "Tiger Lilies," "Florida," and more particularly in his dialect poems, "Jones of Jones," "Jones's Private Argument," "Civil (or Oncivil) Rights," etc., he gave abundant evidence that he had utilized both observation and experience sufficiently to take rank with the best dialect writers and "character" delineators, if his mind

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had not been on higher thoughts intent. A genuine humor crops out here and there in his writings, though they were seldom of a humorous kind, and he was always brimful of fun, even when the battle was against him, as the following little pleasantry, acknowledging delicacies sent to his sickbed, will indicate :

How oft the answers to our passing
prayers

Drop down in forms our fancy ne'er
foretold!

Thus when, of late, consumed by wasting cares,

"Angels, preserve us!" from my lips
unrolled,

I'm sure I pictured not, while thus I
prayed,

Angels, preserve me, would, with marmalade.

No account of his school days, except the Saturdays, has yet been given; but he must have had fairly good teachers and instruction, for at a little less than fifteen years of age he was admitted

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to Oglethorpe College, a small institution under Presbyterian control at Midway, near Milledgeville, which was then the capital of the state. January 6, 1857, he writes home: "We were admitted into our classes, I into "Soph," Will into Junior. I have just done studying to-night my first lesson—to wit, forty-five lines of Horace, which I 'did' in about fifteen minutes." Only one of his teachers seems to have left his impress upon him, Prof. James Woodrow, since widely known as a strong and stimulating professor in the theological seminary at Columbia, S. C., and as President of South Carolina College. To him, as in the last weeks of his life Mr. Lanier stated, he was indebted for the strongest and most valuable stimulus of his life. And in more ways than one did this little college prove to be congenial soil for the development of this rich and luxuriant nature, which, sending

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out its tendrils in every direction, grew and thrived. He lived in an atmosphere of ardent and loyal friendship. His warm and enthusiastic heart and his keenly alert and capacious mind both demanded fellowship; and already revelations were gradually coming to him, intimations of what he might learn from study of books, from art, from nature, from men. His classmate and roommate in the Junior year, Mr. T. F. Newell, vividly describes this period: "I can recall my association with him with sweetest pleasure, especially those Attic nights, for they are among the dearest and tenderest recollections of my life, when with a few chosen companions we would read from some treasured volume, it may have been Tennyson or Carlyle or Christopher North's "*Noctes Ambrosianæ*," or we would make the hours vocal with music and song; those happy nights, which were veritable

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refections of the gods, and which will be remembered with no other regret than that they will never more return. On such occasions I have seen him walk up and down the room and with his flute extemporize the sweetest music ever vouchsafed to mortal ear. At such times it would seem as if his soul were in a trance, and could only find existence, expression, in the ecstasy of tone, that would catch our souls with his into the very seventh heaven of harmony. Or in merry mood, I have seen him take a banjo, for he could play on any instrument, and as with deft fingers he would strike some strange new note or chord, you would see his eyes brighten, he would begin to smile and laugh as if his very soul were tickled, while his hearers would catch the inspiration, and an old-fashioned 'walk-round' and 'negro breakdown,' in which all would participate, would be the inevitable result. At other

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times, with our musical instruments, we would sally forth into the night and 'neath moon and stars and under 'Bonny Bell window panes'—ah, those serenades! were there ever or will there ever be anything like them again?—when the velvet flute notes of Lanier would fall pleasantly upon the night, and

The bosom of that harmony,

And sailed and sailed incessantly,
As if a petal from a wild rose blown
Had fluttered down that pool of tone,
And floated down the glassy tide,
And clarified and glorified,
The solemn spaces where shadows bide.

And then on Saturdays we would walk through the groves and the 'gospeling glooms' of the woods, where every sound was a joy and inspiration. I have never seen one who enjoyed nature more than he. And his love for her was so intense that I have sometimes imagined he could hear the murmur, the music, that springs from the growing of grass.

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All tree-sounds, rustling of pine cones,
Wind sighings, doves' melodious moans,
And night's unearthly undertones."

More than once at this period do we hear of this trance state while he was playing. Apparently unconscious, he would seem to hear the richest music; or again he would awake from a deep trance, alone, on the floor of his room, and the nervous strain would leave him sadly shaken in nerves. For this reason his father prevailed upon him to devote himself to the flute rather than to the violin, for it was the violin voice that above all others commanded his soul. In after years more than one listener remarked the strange violin effects which he conquered from the flute.

As a student at college he gave his spare time chiefly to musical practice and to reading. He had earlier read Scott, Froissart, "Gil Blas," Mayne Reid, "Don Quixote," "Reynard the Fox," and per-

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haps some of the eighteenth century English writers. But now he roamed at will in a wider field, and took his delight in Shakespeare, Landor, Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, Schiller, Carlyle, Tennyson, etc. "There was one thing remarkable about Lanier as a student at college," adds Mr. Newell: "Although passionately fond of music, both in theory and in practice, even at that early age conceded by all who had the pleasure of hearing him as the finest of flute players ; although he was ever ready to show his love for nature and art in their various forms and manifestations, yet he was a persistent student, an omnivorous reader of books, and in his college classes was easily first in mathematics as well as in his other studies. He loved all the sciences. The purest fountains of Greek and Roman literature had nourished and fed his youthful mind. But even at that early age I recall how he delight-

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ed in the quaint and curious of our old literature. I remember that it was he who introduced me to that rare old book, Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy,' whose name and size had frightened me as I first saw it on the shelves, but which I found to be wholly different from what its title would indicate; and old Jeremy Taylor, 'the poet-preacher;' and Keats's 'Endymion' and 'Chatterton,' the 'marvelous boy who perished in his pride.' Yes, I first learned the story of the Monk Rowley and his wonderful poems with Lanier. And Shelley and Coleridge and Christopher North, and that strange, weird poem of 'The Ettrick Shepherd' of 'How Kilmeny Came Hame,' and a whole sweet host and noble company, 'rare and complete.' Yes, Tennyson, with his 'Locksley Hall' and his 'In Memoriam' and his 'Maud,' which last we almost knew by heart. And then old Carlyle with his 'Sartor

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Resartus,' 'Hero Worship,' 'Past and Present,' and his wonderful book of essays, especially the ones on Burns and Jean Paul, 'The Only.' Without a doubt it was Carlyle who first enkindled in Lanier a love of German literature and a desire to know more of the language."

Thus the happy, golden time sped till he reached graduation, a little beyond eighteen. With a fellow-senior he shared the honors of the day and delivered his essay, entitled "The Philosophy of History," which began with a quotation from Walter Savage Landor, whose writings he admired. He was immediately elected tutor, and returned in the fall to give only six months, as it happened, to his new vocation. But in that short time he did much miscellaneous reading, and began to jot down some hints and fragments of a poetical, musical conception, which seems to have haunted his

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short after life, clamoring for an embodiment which was ever denied it—a sort of musical drama of the peasant uprising in France, called the “Jacquerie.” That which did take shape, a mere fragment, and three songs written for it are included in his “Unrevised Early Poems.” “These very first poetical efforts linger in my memory,” says his brother Clifford, “as being *Byronesque*, if not *Wertheresque*, at least tinged with gloominess as of Young’s ‘Night [or a young man’s nightlike] Thoughts.’ . . . He has not preserved any of these lucubrations, perhaps because they were not hale, hearty, breathing of sanity, hope, betterment, aspiration. . . . I have his first attempt at poetry. It is characteristic, it is not suggestive of swallow flights of song, but of an eaglet peering up toward the empyrean.”

At the early age of eighteen the pure, high-souled youth confides his thoughts to a notebook which now

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affords many attractive glimpses of his inner life, his aspirations, his longings, and his keenly alive personality, with its eager outlook upon and vivid realization of life, its quick apprehension, its intensity of spirit. Goethe's wonderful saying, "im Ganzen, Guten, Wahren resolut zu leben," might have been adopted as his motto. And his mind is already aglow with the thought of writing something which the world will not willingly let die, while at the same time he is more consciously aware of the divine gift of music in his soul. "Is it genius?" he asks, all a-tremble, and begins a memorable twenty-year struggle with earnest, humble questionings as to God's will concerning the use of it. In discussing with himself how far inclinations were to be regarded as indications of capacity and duty, he says: "The point which I wish to settle is merely by what method shall I ascertain what I am fit for,

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as preliminary to ascertaining God's will with reference to me; or what my inclinations are, as preliminary to ascertaining what my capacities are—that is, what I am fit for. I am more than all perplexed by this fact: that the prime inclination—that is, natural bent (which I have checked, though)—of my nature is to music, and for that I have the greatest talent; indeed, not boasting, for God gave it me, I have an extraordinary musical talent, and feel it within me plainly that I could rise as high as any composer. But I cannot bring myself to believe that I was intended for a musician, because it seems so small a business in comparison with other things which, it seems to me, I might do. Question here: 'What is the province of music in the economy of the world?'

There is a feeling of inexpressible sadness on finding this young swan among the ducklings, for music is no part of their nature. Nay, more: the

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people among whom he was born and lived, including his own father, held it unmanly to be a musician. But young Lanier does not rest content till he finds an answer, at least for himself, to his own question, which he gives only a very few years later in "Tiger Lilies: "

"I wonder how it is that many good American people even now consider music a romantic amusement rather than a common necessity of life! when surely of all the commonplaces none is more broadly common or more inseparable from daily life. Music! It is as common . . . as bricks, common as anvils, common as water, common as fireplaces! For every brick mason sings to his trowel strokes, and blacksmiths strike true rhythmical time, even to triplets—I've heard 'em—and sailors whistle in calm or windy weather, and households jangle and thrum and strain on all manner of stringed and wind in-

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struments. Music is in common life what heat is in chemistry, an all-pervading, ever-present, mysterious genius. The carpenter whistles to cheer his work, the loafer whistles to cheer his idleness. The church for life, and the barroom for death; the theater for tears, and the circus for smiles; the parlor for wealth, and the street for poverty—each of these nowadays has its inevitable, peculiar orchestra. And so every emotion continually calls, like the clown in the play: ‘Music without there!’ Victory chants, defeat wails; joy has gallops, sorrow her dirges; patriotism shouts its *Marseillaise*, and love lives on music for food, says Old Will. Moreover, the Chinese beats his gong, and the African his jawbone; the Greek blew Dorian flutes; the Oriental charms serpents with his flageolet; German Mendelssohn sends up saint-
• ly thanks; Polish Chopin pleads for a man’s broken heart, and American

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Gottschalk fills the room full of
great, sad-eyed ghosts—all with the
piano! Aye,

There's not a star that thou beholdest
there

But in his motion like an angel *sings*,
Still choiring to the young-eyed cheru-
bim!

And so from 'street mud' up to
'star fire,' through all grades, runs
the multitudinous song of time.
From a christening to a funeral is
seventy years: one choir sings at
the christening, another choir sings
at the funeral. All the life between
the dead man sang, in some sort,
what tunes his heart could make.
Late explorers say that they have
found some nations that had no God,
but I have not read of any that had
no music! Wherefore, since in all
holy worship, in all unholy sarcasm,
in all conditions of life, in all do-
mestic, social, religious, political, and
lonely individual doings; in all pas-
sions, in all countries, earthly or

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heavenly ; in all stages of civilization, of time, or of eternity ; since, I say, in all these music is always present to utter the shallowest or the deepest thoughts of man or spirit—let us cease to call music a fine art, to class it with delicate pastry cookery and confectionery, and to fear to take too much of it lest it should make us sick ! ”

Again he writes : “ I wish that in all the colleges [here in the South] the professor of music were considered, as he should be, one of the professors of metaphysics, and that he ranked of equal dignity with them, and that he stood as much chance of being elected President of the college as the professor of chemistry or the languages.” These extracts show how the artist in him was cabined, cribbed, confined, and bound in to a life which offered no stimulus to the cultivation of his gift, and but scanty appreciation of or sympathy with it, and that, too,

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when he is conscious of the fact that, as he wrote to a friend as late as 1873, "whatever turn I may have for art is purely *musical*, poetry being with me *a mere tangent* into which I shoot sometimes."

But only six months were given to these questionings, when a more practical struggle claimed his attention. "The early spring of 1861 brought to bloom, besides innumerable violets and jessamines, a strange, enormous, and terrible flower. This was the blood-red flower of war, which grows amid thunders; a flower whose freshening dews are blood and hot tears, whose shadow chills a land, whose odors strangle a people, whose giant petals droop downward, and whose roots are in hell. It is a species of the great genus, sin flower, which is so conspicuous in the flora of all ages and all countries, and whose multifarious leafage and fruitage so far overgrow a land that the violet, or love genus,

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has often small chance to show its quiet blue." So experience taught the man to think ; but a certain military taste, early shown in the boyish ardor for bows and arrows, drills, and military parades, and a well-nigh universal war fever which attacked the Southern people, swept the young tutor and his still younger brother into the Macon Volunteers and the Second Georgia Battalion and on to the bloody battlefields of Virginia. They entered as privates, and both, though offered promotion—Sidney three times—remained privates, so singularly tender was their devotion to each other.

During the first year, spent amid the delights of Norfolk society and the Norfolk market, his service was light. But this Capua was soon exchanged for the marches and hardships incident to the battles of Seven Pines, Drewry's Bluffs, and the seven days' fighting around Richmond, culminating in the terrible

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struggle of Malvern Hill, in all of which he took part. He was then transferred to the signal service, and for a short period his headquarters were at Petersburg, where he had the advantage of a small local library. Later he was detached for outpost duty as a mounted signal scout.

After describing a skirmish at Fort Boykin in 1863 his brother adds: "Nearly two years were passed in such skirmishes, racing to escape the enemy's gunboats, signaling dispatches, serenading country beauties, poring over chance books, and foraging for provender along the Blackwater." His conduct throughout was marked by a strict adherence to discipline as well as the bright *insouciance* of the American citizen-soldier; but neither pleasure nor hardships could win him from music and study, or veil from his eyes the beauties of nature. In camp he tries to set some of

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Tennyson's songs to music, especially one in Elaine, "The Song of Love and Death." He studies the German language, and translates in intervals of repose or at night, after his horse is curried, Heine, Goethe, and Schiller for self-instruction. While he is serving with a detachment of scouts the enemy surprises their little camp and carries off, besides their clothes, cooking utensils, and cots, his treasures—"Heine," "Aurora Leigh," "Les Misérables," "Macaria," and a German glossary. But no one but a poet could capture the glassy, cool, translucent wave of Burwell's Bay, the white shell beach, mile upon mile, the towering bluff decked with a million green mosses and trickling springs and crowned with great oaks holding out their arms from the top in a perpetual attitude of blessing, and the vast expanse across Hampton Roads, out between the capes, on to the broad waters. No, nor that little garden

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of Eden there, now hid away in "Tiger Lilies"—"a small dell which is round as a basin, two hundred yards in diameter, shut in on all sides. Beeches, oaks, lithe hickories, straight pines, roof over this dell with a magnificent boscage. In the center of it bubbles a limpid spring. Shy companies of flowers stand between the long grasses; some of them show wide, startled eyes, many of them have hidden away in cunning nooks. Over them, regarding them in silent and passionate tenderness, lean the ebony-fibered ferns; and the busy mosses do their very best to hide all rudeness and all decay behind a green velvet arras. The light does not dare shine very brightly here; it is soft and sacred, tempered with green leaves, with silence, with odors, with beauties. Wandering perfumes, restless with happiness, float about aimlessly; they are the only inhabitants here." Amid these

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scenes there was a renewed "stirring within his soul of that genius which was to place him among that goodly company whose fellowship he so dearly loved." One who knew him at this time describes him as a slender, gray-eyed youth, full of enthusiasm, playful with a dainty mirthfulness, a tender humor, most like the great musician, Mendelssohn.

In 1864 the brothers were separated, Sidney being assigned to duty as signal officer to the blockade runner "Annie." On the first run out of East Inlet, near Fort Fisher, she was captured, and Sidney, refusing to don the clothes of his fellow-officers, Englishmen, and declare himself a foreigner, was taken to Point Lookout prison, "where were sown the seeds of fell disease, to retard whose growth was the greatest part of his endeavor for the following few years." These days of confinement were

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cheered by fellowship with a kindred spirit, another prisoner since widely known as the poet-priest, Father Tabb, and solaced by his inseparable companion through life, his flute, which he had carried hidden in his sleeve into the prison with him. After five months he was released on an exchange of prisoners, but owing to his thin clothing and the cold weather he came near dying on the water voyage to City Point. The story of his rescue from death is graphically told by the lady herself who was the good Samaritan on this occasion. She was an old friend from Montgomery, Ala., returning from New York to Richmond; and her little daughter, who had learned to call him "Brother Sid," chanced to hear that he was down in the hold of the vessel dying. On application to the colonel in command permission was promptly given to her to minister to his necessity, and

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she made haste to go below. "Now my friends in New York," continued she, "had given me a supply of medicines, for we had few such things in Dixie, and among the remedies were quinine and brandy. I hastily took a flask of brandy, and we went below, where we were led to the rude stalls provided for cattle, but now crowded with poor human wretches. There in that horrible place dear Sidney Lanier lay wrapped in an old quilt, his thin hands tightly clinched, his face drawn and pinched, his eyes fixed and staring, his poor body shivering now and then in a spasm of pain. Lilla fell at his side, kissing him and calling: 'Brother Sid, don't you know me? Don't you know your little sister?' But no recognition or response came from the sunken eyes. I poured some brandy into a spoon and gave it to him. It gurgled down his throat at first with no effort from him to

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swallow it. I repeated the stimulant several times before he finally revived. At last he turned his eyes slowly about until he saw Lilla, and murmured: 'Am I dead? Is this Lilla? Is this heaven?' . . . To make a long story short, the colonel assisted us to get him above to our cabin. I can see his fellow-prisoners now as they crouched and assisted to pass him along over their heads, for they were so packed that they could not make room to carry him through. Along over their heads they tenderly passed the poor, emaciated body, so shrunk with prison life and benumbed with cold. We got him into clean blankets, but at first he could not endure the pain from the fire, he was so nearly frozen. We gave him some hot soup and more brandy, and he lay quiet till after midnight. Then he asked for his flute and began playing. As he played the first few notes, you should have heard

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the yell of joy that came up from the shivering wretches down below, who knew that their comrade was alive. And there we sat entranced about him, the colonel and his wife, Lilla and I, weeping at the tender music, as the tones of new warmth and color and hope came like liquid melody from his magic flute."

In this enfeebled condition he was landed in February, 1865, and as soon as the exchange was effected he set out on foot for his far-away Georgia home. A twenty-dollar gold piece, which he had in his pocket when captured—doubtless the small sum kept by him when the English captain of the "Annie," just before capture, directed him to distribute the ship's money among the crew, and an old tar having been overlooked, Lanier gave him all his share but this—and which was returned to him when released—and the friend-making, comfort-earning flute were his sole possessions. Weary and foot-

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sore, he plodded along till March 15, when he reached home utterly exhausted in strength. The hardships of camp and prison life, the bitter cold at sea, and the long, weary journey had proved too much for his constitution, and six weeks of desperate illness was the result. The first days of his recovery witnessed the death of his mother from consumption, and he himself arose from his sick bed with pronounced congestion of one lung. Such, however was the elasticity of his nature—a quality for which he was ever remarkable—that two months with an uncle at Point Clear, on Mobile Bay, where he lived for the most part out of doors and breathed the invigorating, life-giving air of pines and of sea, brought the necessary relief.

Later in life Mr. Lanier wrote to Bayard Taylor: "Perhaps you know that with us of the younger generation in the South, since the

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war, pretty much the whole of life has been merely not dying." Doubtless he had in mind the years of his life between 1865 and 1873. In September, 1865, he writes, amid the uncongenial atmosphere of the schoolroom in a private family: "I'm busy with brain since I wrote you. . . . Have little leisure. . . . Thirty classes a day . . . and failing health prevents sitting up late at night. It almost maddens me to be confined to the horrible monotony of tare and tret (it should be swear and fret) when my brain is fairly teeming with beautiful things."

In December of the same year this servitude was exchanged for a clerkship in a hotel in Montgomery, Ala., whose prosaic duties he discharged till April, 1867, when, having brought to completion his first book, a novel entitled "Tiger Lilies," he made, the following month, his first visit to New York City in search of

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a publisher. In regard to the time taken to write this volume various incorrect statements have been published—all doubtless due to incorrect information. One says, "written in April;" another states that "he wrote in six weeks his only novel," and still another speaks of it as "a novel written within three weeks and published immediately thereafter." In a letter to the writer, received October 9, 1896, Mrs. Lanier writes: "Very recently I have seen a letter of 1867, written to his father while he was finishing the manuscript that had begun its growth in 1862 or 1863 in the atmosphere of camp life. He says of it that, having been written at intervals during several years, it reads like a book that was begun by a boy and was finished by a man, and that he intended to leave it so, as an interesting study of literary growth." In regard to the repeated inquiry why she does not have "Tiger

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Lilies" republished—it is now out of print, and rare copies bring a good sum—Mrs. Lanier says: "There are portions of it that ought to be preserved, I am sure; but in addition to feeling an inequality that is much to the disadvantage of the opening chapters—chapters that are largely discursive moods of a soldier lad whose chaos has not yet taken shape—I am restrained by a passing remark of the author's, made in August, 1881, when words were very few. The book must have been alluded to, for I recall the thoughtful, half-tender tone when he said: 'Perhaps we will rewrite "Tiger Lilies" some day.' I have always accepted this as a definite assurance that he did not wish to reprint the book as it stood." The letter of 1867, however, "seems to make almost a reason for keeping the work alive as it stands."

Mr. Clifford Lanier, in a private letter of September 21, 1896, says:

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"Please remember that the artist in Sidney Lanier would have suppressed so crude and boyish an essay. It is merely a curiosity. It is a welter of suggestions tossing in the mind of a young man passing through the 'sturm und drang' period. It is eccentric as a meteoric sky in August. It is a mesh of roots from which perfect flowers grew. Some of it was conceived, if not written, during military scout duty in Virginia. It is not thought out, but poured out, like the lead fused in a ladle for bullets by a hunter. It is a phantasmagoria of one who wakes from the nightmare of the Civil War."

Few first books could be resurrected with so little drawback to the author's reputation. Its chief value is in the light thrown on the mind and character of the author, and no student of the life and writings of Sidney Lanier can afford to neglect this volume. His voice is just

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changing from boy's to man's, now an airy treble; anon, a gruff bass. The tender strain of "Hyperion" suddenly jars into the savage growl of "Sartor Resartus." Here is a touch of Vergil or Chopin; there, of Shakespeare or Beethoven. "He scatters thoughts as a wind shakes dewdrops from a bourgeoning spray"—a poet's thoughts and a poet's fancies of God and earth and nature and friends and home and books and music—and war, too, and his experiences in prison. But the ever recurring theme is music. Now it is the flute, with which the musicale should always begin. "It is like walking in the woods, among wild flowers, just before you go into some vast cathedral. For the flute seems to me to be peculiarly the woods instrument; it speaks the gloss of green leaves or the pathos of bare branches; it calls up the strange mosses that are under dead leaves; it breathes of wild plants

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that hide and oak fragrances that vanish; it expresses to me the natural magic of music." Again it is an accompaniment that "did not follow, but went with the voice, waving and floating and wreathing around the voice like an airy robe around a sweet, flying form above us."

His idea of making a home out of a household is: "Given the raw materials—to wit, wife, children, a friend or two, and a house—two other things are necessary. These are a good fire and good music. And inasmuch as we can do without the fire for half the year, I may say that music is the one essential. After the evening spent around the piano, or the flute, or the violin, how warm and how chastened is the kiss with which the family all say good-night! Ah, the music has taken all the day cares and thrown them into its terrible alembic, and boiled them and rocked them and cooled them till they are crystallized into one

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care, which is a most sweet and rare desirable sorrow—the yearning for God. We all, from little toddler to father, go to bed with so much of heaven in our hearts, at least, as that we long for it unutterably, and believe it.” And still again his description of the violin—one could quote indefinitely his imaginative and picturesque words descriptive of men or moods or trees or scenes, very fanciful at times, but always resplendent with truth and beauty.

This is indeed a “luxuriant, unpruned, but promising” work, and we cannot but regret the necessity of his being compelled to return to the old life again, with its teaching, business, and law, its skirmishes of bread winning against soul expressing, its battles of disease against health. But in September, 1867, he was again in the schoolroom in charge of an academy with nearly a hundred pupils at Prattville, Ala., where he remained one year.

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In the meantime a new inspiration and vital force entered into his life, bringing that abiding faith and stimulating hope to the poet, and congenial companionship and true conjugal love to the man, which only a rarely gifted, perfect helpmeet can impart. He was married December 19 to Miss Mary Day, daughter of Charles Day, of Macon, Ga. Now could he sing :

Twice-eyed, with thy gray vision set in
mine,
I ken far lands to wifeless men unknown;
I compass stars for one-sexed eyes too
fine.

For her part was to give not only everyday helpfulness and sustaining courage, but also suggestiveness and inspiration—all of which the poet recognizes in "My Springs :"

In the heart of the hills of life I know
Two springs that with unbroken flow
Forever pour their lucent streams
Into my soul's fair Lake of Dreams.

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Always when faith with stifling stress
Of grief hath died in bitterness,
I gaze in my two springs and see
A faith that smiles immortally.

Always, when art, on perverse wing,
Flies where I cannot hear him sing,
I gaze in my two springs and see
A charm that brings him back to me.

O Love, O Wife, thine eyes are they,
My Springs, from out whose shining gray
Issue the sweet celestial streams
That feed my life's bright Lake of
Dreams.

Oval and large and passion pure
And gray and wise and honor sure,
Soft as a dying violet breath,
Yet calmly unafraid of death.

Dear eyes, dear eyes! and rare complete—
Being heavenly sweet and earthly sweet—
I marvel that God made you mine,
For when he frowns, 'tis then ye shine!

In January, 1868, came the first
hemorrhage, and in May he re-
turned to Macon low in health, but
determined to study and practice
law with his father as soon as he
should sufficiently recuperate. He

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seemed to have a presentiment that such would be his fate, for in "Tiger Lilies" he says: "Of course John Sterling studied law—what young man in our part of the country did not?" And then he adds, "John Sterling, Jr., went forth and committed what may most properly be called a chronological error. He took a wife before he took any fees—surely a grand mistake in point of time, where the fees are essentially necessary to get bread for the wife! Nor was it long before this mistake made itself apparent. Two extra mouths, of little Philip and Felix Sterling, with that horrid propensity to be filled which mouths will exhibit spite of education and the spiritual in man, appeared in his household; outgo began to exceed income; clouds came to obscure the financial sky. Even to those of us who are born to labor, and know it, it is yet a pathetic sight to see a

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man like John Sterling going to his office every morning to sit there all day face to face with the 'horny-eyed phantom' of unceasing drudgery that has no visible end; to know that every hour this man will have some fine yearning beat back in his face by the Heenan fists in this big prize ring we call the world, wherein it would seem that toughness of nose-muscle and active dodging do most frequently come out with the purse and the glory."

It is curious that this should have been published before his marriage, but he could not have more perfectly represented the situation in which he now found himself. His health too grew worse, though fitfully, and in the summer and spring of 1870 there was a marked decline, with settled cough. This took him to New York for treatment, and after two months he returned much improved as he thought, but in reality there was the same steady decline.

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By December, 1872, he had given up hope of permanent relief in his Georgia home and gone to San Antonio, Tex., in search of a new home, leaving wife and children behind. But the soft healing air of this region could bring no relief to one whose whole being was hungering and thirsting to express itself in music and poetry. To his wife he writes :

Were it not for some circumstances which make such a proposition seem absurd in the highest degree, I would think that I am shortly to die, and that my spirit hath been singing its swan song before dissolution. All day my soul hath been cutting swiftly into the great space of the subtle, unspeakable deep, driven by wind after wind of heavenly melody. The very inner spirit of and essence of all wind songs, bird songs, passion songs, folk songs, country songs, sex songs, soul songs, and body songs hath blown upon me in quick gusts like the breath of passion, and sailed me into a sea of vast dreams, whereof each wave is at once a vision and a melody.

And so in April, 1873, he returned

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with the conviction ever becoming deeper that he had but a short time in which to do his life work, and that life work was to be not in law, but in music and letters.

We catch a glimpse of the inner struggles, which went on during these years, in his first letter to Bayard Taylor, August 17, 1875: "I could never describe to you what a mere drought and famine my life has been as regards that multitude of matters which I fancy one absorbs when one is in an atmosphere of art, or when one is in conversational relation with men of letters, with travelers, with persons who have either seen, or written, or done large things." Step by step he was driven to follow his natural bent, to seek a musical atmosphere and a land of books and the companionship of those who could understand his longings and appreciate his gifts.

From Baltimore, November 29, 1873, he writes to his father, who

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generously offers him a share in his business and income :

My dear father, think how, for twenty years, through poverty, through pain, through weariness, through sickness, through the uncongenial atmosphere of a farcical college, and a bare army, and then of an exacting business life, through all the discouragement of being wholly unacquainted with literary people and literary ways—I say, think how, in spite of all these depressing circumstances, and of a thousand more which I could enumerate, these two figures of music and of poetry have steadily kept in my heart so that I could not banish them. Does it not seem to you, as to me, that I begin to have the right to enroll myself among the devotees of these two sublime arts, after having followed them so long and so humbly, and through so much bitterness?

After another visit to New York he made his home in Baltimore, beginning in December, 1873, an engagement as first flute for the Peabody Symphony Concerts. In the spring of 1874 he writes: "I've shed all the tears about it that I'm going to,

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and am now pumping myself full of music and poetry, with which I propose to water the dry world. . . . God has cut me off inexorably from any other life than this (literary and artistic). So, St. Cecilia to the rescue! and I hope *God* will like my music."

To Paul H. Hayne, whom he had never seen, but with whom he had exchanged many a pleasant letter, he writes in May :

I spent last winter in Baltimore, pursuing music and meditating my "Jacquerie." I was *flauto-primo* of the Peabody Symphony Orchestra, and God only could express the delight and exultation with which I helped to perform the great works brought out by that organization during the season. Of course this was a queer place for me. Aside from the complete *bouleversement* of proceeding from the courthouse to the footlights, I was a raw player and a provincial withal, without practice, and guiltless of instruction—for I had never had a teacher. To go under these circumstances among old professional players, and assume a lead-

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ing part in a large orchestra which was organized expressly to play the most difficult works of the great masters, was (now that it's all over) a piece of temerity that I don't remember ever to have equaled before. But I trusted in love, pure and simple, and was not disappointed; for, as if by miracle, difficulties and discouragements melted away before the fire of a passion for music which grows ever stronger within my heart; and I came out with results more gratifying than it is becoming in me to specify. 'Tis quite settled that I cannot practice law. Either writing or speaking appears to produce small hemorrhages which completely sap my strength; and I am going in a few weeks to New York, without knowing what on earth I am to do there, armed only with a silver Böhm flute and some dozen of steel pens.

But Baltimore was henceforth his home, and for the remainder of his short life he was "engaged always in a threefold struggle, for health, for bread, and for a literary career." Often for months at a time he was forced to give up regular duties and to go away in search of recovery and

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renewed vitality. Flute and pen and lectures in schools enabled him to eke out a bare subsistence, though at the critical times of utter prostration the generous help of father and brother was necessary to prolong the struggle. The following sketch for a poem or possibly a passionate cry for help, which was found among his papers after his death, doubtless belongs to this period :

O Lord, if thou wert needy as I,
If thou should'st come to my door as I to
thine,
If thou hungered so much as I
For that which belongs to the spirit,
For that which is fine and good,
Ah, friend, for that which is fine and
good,
I would give it to thee if I had power.
For that which I want is, first, bread—
Thy decree, not my choice, that bread
must be first;
Then music, then some time out of the
struggle for bread to write my poems;
Then to put out of care Henry and Rob-
ert, whom I love.
O my God, how little would put them out
of care!

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And his last letter to Paul H. Hayne, written in November, 1880, reveals the fact that these struggles continued to the last :

I have been wishing to write to you for a long time, and have *thought* several letters to you. But I could never tell you the extremity of illness, of poverty, and of unceasing toil, in which I have spent the last three years, and you would need only once to see the weariness with which I crawl to bed after a long day's work, and after a long night's work at the heels of it—and Sunday's just as well as other days—in order to find in your heart a full warrant for my silence. It seems incredible that I have printed such an unchristian quantity of matter—all too tolerably successful—and secured so little money; and the wife and the four boys, who are so lovely that I would not think a palace good enough for them if I had it, make one's earnings seem all the less. . . . For six months past a ghastly fever has been taking possession of me, about 12 M., and holding my head under the surface of indescribable distress *for the next twenty hours*, subsiding only enough each morning to let me get on my working harness, but *never intermitting*. A num-

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ber of tests shows it to be not the hectic so well known in consumption, and to this day it has baffled all the skill I could find in New York, Philadelphia, and here. I have myself been disposed to think it arose wholly from the bitterness of having to spend my time in making academic lectures and boys' books—potboilers all—when a thousand songs are singing in my heart, that will certainly kill me if I do not utter them soon. But I don't think this diagnosis has found favor with my practical physicians; and meanwhile I work on in such suffering as is piteous to see.

But his courage never failed him, and the amount of work he dispatched in the intervals between his hemorrhages is surprising. He began by making a thorough and systematic study of English literature, giving special attention to the Old-English period, and Langland, Chaucer, and Shakespeare, and then, "with a scholar's nice eagerness," he extended his reading widely in the natural sciences, philosophy, history, art, and music. "The trouble

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with Poe was," he observed with keen discrimination, "he did not know enough. He needed to know a good many more things in order to be a great poet." Besides this, he attended rehearsals and played in the symphony concerts, edited books, prepared lectures, and wrote magazine articles and poems. This kind of work opened a new era in his artistic development; for though he could previously say, "So many great ideas for art are born to me each day, I am swept into the land of All-delight by their strenuous sweet whirlwind," he had rarely given expression to them. In music he needed neither art nor practice to fit him for its expression. He played as a mocking bird sings, with skill and repertoire furnished by nature. In poetry, however, he must first work out, adopt, and then endeavor to master a theory of formal verse, which was not popular; and as the conscientious artist in him re-

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fused permission to send forth any work but the best, he made his way slowly into the literary world. Fortunately combined with this tardiness of artistic poetic utterance were the consciousness of his powers and the patience to await the ripening time, "not taking thought of being late, so it give advantage to be more fit." In the meanwhile he is not without delightful experience and anticipation. "Day by day," he writes to his wife in February, 1870, "from my snow and my sunshine, a thousand vital elements rill through my soul. Day by day the secret deep forces gather, which will presently display themselves in bending leaf and waxy petal, and in useful fruit and grain."

In May, 1874, Lanier went again to Florida, commissioned by a railroad company to write an account of its scenery, climate, and history, and on his return he spent two months with his family at Sunny-

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side, Ga. With a poet's eye and kindled imagination he gazed upon the ample fields and woods of his native land, the old worn red hills, the zig-zag - cornered fence with sassafras and brambles dense, the dew-flashed road of early morn, the woods trembling through and through with shimmering forms, the mosses, ferns, and flowers shy, the rustling blades of corn whispering music to his ear, caught their free, large spirit, and sang with a new and fresh note all his own the first song of his to which the world gave heed—"Corn." A personal visit to New York in search of an editor who would publish it for him only revealed the "wooden-headedness" of some literary leaders, but this neither soured nor discouraged his kindly and hopeful nature. "I remember," he writes, "that it has always been so; that the new man has always to work his way over these Alps of Stupidity, much as

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that ancient general crossed the actual Alps—splitting the rocks with vinegar and fire—that is, by bitterness and suffering. D. V., I will split them. . . . The more I am thrown against these people here, and the more reverses I suffer at their hands, the more confident I am of beating them finally. I do not mean by ‘beating’ that I am in opposition to them, or that I hate them or feel aggrieved with them; no, they know no better, and they act up to their light with wonderful energy and consistency. I only mean that I am sure of being able, some day, to teach them better things and nobler modes of thought and conduct.” After further effort, however, “Corn” found a place in *Lippincott’s Magazine* for February, 1875, but the theme was too commonplace and the treatment too original to expect immediate general recognition of its merits. To a select few it was evident that a new

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singer had come. First of these was Mr. Gibson Peacock, editor of the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, whose collegiate training and broad and generous culture, derived from wide reading in the best English literature, home and foreign travel, cultivation in music and dramatic criticism, enabled him to conduct a newspaper in which literary and artistic matters received serious treatment. Mr. Peacock's enthusiastic notice of the poem had a beneficent and far-reaching effect upon the young author's life—a strong and beautiful friendship between the two families, a series of letters from the poet, since published in the *Atlantic*, which relate "so humanly and beautifully the story of so precious a life," and acquaintance "with Charlotte Cushman, with Bayard Taylor, and with many another of the appreciators of art and literature who in those days frequented the little parlors in Walnut

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Street." Lanier received now that broader association, friendship, and appreciation for which he had long been pining, and also "a little of the wine of success and of praise, without which no man ever does the very best he might," as he himself said, in speaking of what would have been of inestimable service to poor Henry Timrod's poetic faculty. These letters, edited with genuine appreciation and real skill by Mr. W. R. Thayer so as to let Lanier's personality, unconsciously drawn by himself, be as complete as possible, not only admit us into the fellowship of a poet, but they also disclose to us a man whose life was, in Milton's phrase, "a true poem." One delights to linger over them, to breathe their atmosphere, to catch their spirit.

The "Symphony" called forth another appreciative notice from Mr. Peacock, which was extensively copied in the Southern newspapers,

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and this time Bayard Taylor's generous voice swelled the chorus.

July 31, 1875, Lanier writes to Mr. Peacock: "Many thanks for Mr. Taylor's letter. I do hope I may be able to see him during the next month. Do you think a letter from me would reach him at Mattapoisett? For his estimate of my Symphony seems to me so full and generous that I think I will not resist the temptation to anticipate his letter to me. I will write also to Mr. Calvert to-morrow. His insight into a poet's internal working, as developed in his kind notice of me in the *Golden Age*, is at once wonderful and delightful." Mr. Taylor now became one of Lanier's most valued friends. He gave him freely counsel, sympathy, introductions to other writers, and it was at his suggestion that Lanier was selected to write the cantata for the opening of the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. which first brought his

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name into general notice. From Baltimore, January 8, 1876, he writes to his wife :

Well then: God be praised that giveth us the victory. I have late this afternoon finished my third India paper, which was a great labor and strain; and to-night we have played a divine concert of Scandinavian music, whereof I inclose thee the programme; and my heart is so full of this heavenly melody that I cannot find me any rest till I have in some wise enlarged me.

Moreover I have a charming piece of news which—although thou art not yet to communicate it to any one except Clifford—I cannot keep from thee. The opening ceremonies of the Centennial Exhibition will be very grand; and among other things there are to be sung by a full chorus (and played by the orchestra, under Thomas's direction) a hymn and a cantata. Gen. Hawley, President of the Centennial Commission, has written inviting me to write the latter (I mean the *poem*; Dudley Buck, of New York, is to write the music). Bayard Taylor is to write the hymn. This is very pleasing to me; for I am chosen as representative of our dear South; and the matter puts my

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name by the side of very delightful and honorable ones, besides bringing me in contact with many people I would desire to know.

Mr. Buck has written me that he wants the poem by January 15, which as I have not yet had the least time for it, gives me just seven days to write it in. I would much rather have had seven months; but God is great. Remember, thou and Cliff, that this is not yet to be spoken of at all.

In a letter to Mr. Peacock, written the 18th, he inclosed the first draft of the cantata, saying: "Necessarily I had to think out the musical conception as well as the poem, and I have briefly indicated these along the margin of each movement. I have tried to make the whole as simple and as candid as a melody of Beethoven's; at the same time expressing the largest ideas possible, and expressing them in such a way as could not be offensive to any modern soul. I particularly hope you will like the Angel's song, where I have endeavored to convey,

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in one line each, the philosophies of Art, of Science, of Power, of Government, of Faith, and of Social Life. Of course I shall not expect that this will instantly appeal to tastes peppered and salted by Swinburne and that ilk; but one cannot forget Beethoven, and somehow all my inspirations come in these large and artless forms, in simple Saxon words, in unpretentious and purely intellectual conceptions; while nevertheless I felt, all through, the necessity of making a genuine song, and not a rhymed set of good adages, out of it. I adopted the trochees of the first movement because they *compel* a measured, sober, and meditative movement of the mind; and because, too, they are not the genius of our language. When the trochees cease and the land emerges as a distinct unity, then I fall into our native iambics." Of Mr. Buck he writes: "We have gotten on together with perfect harmony during

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the process of fitting together the words and the music, which has been wholly accomplished by letter."

The sky became somewhat brighter now; he was better paid for his work, receiving three hundred dollars for the "Psalm of the West," and his heart was gladdened by tokens of love and sympathy at home. From Macon he writes, April 27, 1876: "The Southern people make a great deal more of my appointment to write the cantata poem than I had ever expected, and it really seems to be regarded by them as one of the most substantial tokens of reconciliation yet evinced by that vague *tertium quid* which they are accustomed to represent to themselves under the general term of the 'North.' I am astonished, too, to find what a hold 'Corn' has taken upon all classes. Expressions come to me in great number from men whom I never supposed accessible

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by any poetry whatever ; and these recognitions arrive hand in hand with those from persons of the highest culture. The *Tribune* notice of the cantata has been copied by a great many Southern papers, and I think it materially assisted in starting the poem off properly ; though the people here are so enthusiastic in my favor at present that they are quite prepared to accept blindly anything that comes from me. Of course I understand all this ; and any success seems cheap which depends so thoroughly on local pride as does my present position with the South ; yet in view of the long and bitter struggle which I must make up my mind to wage in carrying out these extensions of poetic forms about which all my thoughts now begin to converge, it is pleasant to find that I have at least the nucleus of an audience which will be willing to receive me upon the plane of mere blind faith until time shall have giv-

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en a more scientific basis to their understandings."

The publication of the cantata without the orchestral accompaniment, which the poet intended should be its chief distinction, occasioned an immense amount of ridicule, some good-natured, some spiteful. This criticism pained him deeply, though he quickly regained the serene heights on which he strove habitually to live. Not even to his friend Mr. Peacock did he show how sharp a sting it was, merely writing in a letter of April 27, in reference to one of the most vicious of these attacks: "Nothing rejoices me more than the inward perception how utterly the time and the frame of mind are passed by in which anything of this sort gives me the least disturbance. Six months ago this would have hurt me, even against my will. Now it seems only a little grotesque episode—just as when a few minutes ago I sat in

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my father's garden here and heard a catbird pause in the midst of the most exquisite *roulades* and melodies, to mew, and then take up his song again." But to his father he wrote from New York, May 8, more seriously: "My experience in the varying judgments given about poetry . . . has all converged upon one solitary principle, and the experience of the artist in all ages is reported by history to be of precisely the same direction. That principle is that the artist shall put forth humbly and lovingly, and without bitterness against opposition, the very best and highest that is within him, utterly regardless of contemporary criticism. What possible claim can contemporary criticism set up to respect—that criticism which crucified Jesus Christ, stoned Stephen, hooted Paul for a madman, tried Luther for a criminal, tortured Galileo, bound Columbus in chains, drove Dante into a hell of exile,

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made Shakespeare write the sonnet 'When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,' gave Milton five pounds for 'Paradise Lost,' kept Samuel Johnson cooling his heels on Lord Chesterfield's doorstep, reviled Shelley as an unclean dog, killed Keats, cracked jokes on Glück, Schubert, Beethoven, Berlioz, and Wagner, and committed so many other impious follies and stupidities that a thousand letters like this could not suffice even to catalogue them?"

The reception given his poem continued to interest him deeply, and a few weeks later, May 27, he wrote to his wife, from Philadelphia, the following characteristic letter:

The papers are wondrously more respectful in their tone toward me, and it really seems as if my end of the seesaw was now rising steadily. I think the business has been of great value to all my artistic purpose, just at this stage of it; I have been compelled to throw aside every adventitious thing in the way of inspiration. God has been good to show

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me at the outset in its most repulsive form the fatal figure of contemporary popularity, and to remind me how far apart from it were Shakespeare, Beethoven, and Bach. Hereupon I feel already resulting an immortal and unconquerable toughness of fiber in the strings of my harp, insomuch that if the world shall attempt to play me—as it *does* play all the popular men—it will only get its awkward fingers sore. . . .

I inclose a slip or two for thy perusal. The — is marvelously another — than the contemptuous thing which a few weeks ago dismissed my poem in three lines. Of course all it says in this note is simply that sort of nonsense which Stoddard affectionately calls “rot;” the — neither knows nor cares anything with regard to music.

But this criticism had no tendency to weaken the confidence which Lanier had acquired in his view of the principles of art. In his period of greatest uncertainty he had written to his wife: “It is of little consequence whether I fail; the *I* in the matter is a small business. ‘*Que mon nom soit flétri, que la France*

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soit libre!’ quoth Danton; which is to say, interpreted by my environment: ‘Let my name perish—the poetry is good poetry and the music is good music, and beauty dieth not, and the heart that needs it will find it.’” But a little remark in 1875 anent “Special Pleading” reveals the fact that he is no longer agitated over the matter. “In this little song I have begun to dare to give myself some freedom in my own peculiar style, and have allowed myself to treat words, similes, and meters with such freedom as I desired. The result convinces me that I can do so now safely.” And as a natural result he entered upon a period of greater productivity—“Clover,” “The Waving of the Corn,” “The Bee,” “The Song of the Chattahoochee,” “The Revenge of Hamish,” “The Marshes of Glynn,” and many more following in rapid succession those already mentioned. Ten of these poems were collected into a thin vol-

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ume, covering only ninety-four pages, and published by the Lippincotts in 1877, "but they strike the whole range of his ambition."¹ Other writings during this period were a series of papers on India for *Lippincott's Magazine*, in which to avoid arid encyclopedic treatment and give naturalness to the adventures and descriptions, he called to his aid a delightful imaginary Hindoo friend—and his book on "Florida," published in 1876 by the Lippincott's, which cost him much travel, fatigue, and labor. In a letter to Paul H. Hayne he writes: "After working day and night for the last three months on the materials I had previously collected, I have just finished the book. . . . This production is a sort of spiritualized guide-book. . . . I have had to labor from ten to fourteen hours a day, and the confinement to the desk brought on my old hemorrhages a month ago, which quite threatened for a time to

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suspend my work forever on this side the river." And yet this "pot-boiler," written under such conditions, is thoroughly characteristic of the author—cheerful, scientific, imaginative, full of delightful information, going out of the way to say a kind thing or quote a charming poem of a brother Southern poet, though it is melancholy reading when we call to mind a sentence in a letter written a little earlier to another friend: "My head and my heart are both so full of poems which the dreadful struggle for bread does not give me time to put on paper that I am often driven to headache and heartache purely for want of an hour or two to hold a pen."

His personal appearance at this time was striking, and fixed itself in the memory. "The name of Sidney Lanier," says Mr. E. C. Stedman, "brings him clearly to recollection as I saw him more than once in the study of our lamented

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Deucalion—the host so buoyant and sympathetic—the Southerner, nervous and eager, with dark hair and silken beard, features delicately molded, pallid complexion, and hands of the slender, white, artistic type.” In a letter to the writer October 9, 1896, Mrs. Lanier says: “The profile portrait in the volume of ‘Complete Poems’—taken from photograph of January, 1874—quite misrepresents his physique; for it suggests a man heavy built about the shoulders—the effect of a double-breasted coat of extraordinary thickness and other heaviest clothing—all worn to guard him from the rigor of the first Northern winter; while the attitude (inclining backward), in combination with this bulk of clothing, results in the wider discrepancy of an impression of portliness—the very opposite of his build and movement. A bow that is a-spring, a flying Mercury, more ethereal than John of Bologna’s, with slen-

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der, yet uplifted chest—these rather convey the spirit of his earthly tenement. This profile, though it withholds the eye—brilliant and penetrating, yet tender—gives finely the expressive nostril, the brow, the ear, the fall of the silken-textured hair. More than any other it discloses to me the spiritual man, as the likeness taken at fifteen speaks the very spirit of the boy—that is, the original ambrotype and the direct photographic copies. No engraving of this face has approached success.”

During the next two or three years Lanier was disappointed in various efforts to get permanent employment. In the summer and fall of 1876 he entertained the hope of filling “a sort of nondescript chair of Poetry and Music” in Johns Hopkins University, which was all the more tantalizing because of the President’s evident inclination to make the offer. Next we hear of a

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faint wish that Mr. Hayes would appoint him to a consulship in the south of France. Then his kinsmen and friends made a determined effort to secure him a place in one of the departments in Washington; but September 27, 1877, he writes to Mr. Peacock: "There does not appear the least hope of success here. Three months ago the order was given by Secretary Sherman that I should have the first vacancy; but the appointment clerk, who received the order, is a singular person, and I am told that there are rings within rings in the department to such an extent that vacancies are filled by petty chiefs of division without ever being reported at all to the proper officers." November 3 he writes again: "I have set on foot another attempt to get a place in the Johns Hopkins University; I also have a prospect of employment as an assistant at the Peabody Library here; and there is still a possibility of a

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- committee clerkship in Washington. Meantime, however, I am just resuming work for the editors"—after nearly a year in search of health at Tampa, Fla., and in Georgia. He also now utilized his studies of English literature in a course of lectures on Elizabethan verse, which was delivered to a parlor class of thirty ladies. The enthusiastic reception accorded them induced him the following winter (1878-79) to give a Shakespeare course, concerning which he wrote to Mr. Peacock November 5, 1878: "I wished to show, to such a class as I could assemble, how much more genuine profit there would be in *studying at first hand*, under the guidance of an enthusiastic interpreter, the writers and conditions of a particular epoch (for instance), than in reading any amount of commentary or in
- hearing any number of miscellaneous lectures on subjects which range from Palestine to pottery in the

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course of a week." Financially, both courses were a failure, but besides the great praise which they called forth there came at last, and almost too late, the long-desired appointment to a position in the university. It took the shape of a lectureship on English literature—the duties of which he was to assume the following scholastic year—and President Gilman's official notification reached the poet on his birthday, February 3, 1879, bringing with it the assurance, for the first time since his marriage twelve years before, of a fixed income. The summer of 1879 was spent at Rockbridge Alum Springs, in Virginia; and such was the rapidity with which he was now working that in six weeks he put into permanent form the results of his studies and investigations of the subject of versification. Used first as lectures, the work appeared in 1880 as "The Science of English Verse," and con-

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tained the theories which at times seemed to be dearer to the author than the success of his own poetry. Like other original treatises, it has called forth curiously opposite statements, ranging all the way from Mr. Stedman's, "That remarkable piece of analysis, 'The Science of English Verse,' serves little purpose except, like Coleridge's metaphysics, to give us further respect for its author's intellectual powers," to Prof. Sill's "The work of Sidney Lanier on English verse may be recommended as the only one that has ever made any approach to a rational view of the subject. Nor are the standard ones overlooked in making this assertion." A modification of the latter view seems more likely to prevail, as not a few are inclined to accept it as the best working theory for English verse from Cædmon to Tennyson that has yet been produced. This is specially true of those who stand

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"on that middle ground where Lanier dwelt, halfway between verse and music." Fortunately, however, Lanier was able to throw off the shackles of his *Science*, as Poe was of his *Rationale*, though not so uniformly nor so completely as Poe. It would have been better, however, if Lanier had ever kept in mind some of the closing words of this treatise, "that the matters herein treated are only in the nature of hints, . . . and by no means laws. For the artist in verse there is no law: the perception and love of beauty constitute the whole outfit; and what is herein set forth is to be taken merely as enlarging that perception and exalting that love. In all cases the appeal is to the ear; but the ear should, for that purpose, be educated up to the highest possible plane of culture."

With great rapidity and evenness of work Lanier edited also between 1878 and 1881 a series of books for

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boys, which appeared as follows: "Froissart," 1879; "King Arthur," 1880; "Mabinogion," 1881; and "Percy," 1882. The editing shows not only knowledge, taste, and conscientious labor; but also reveals that genuine love for the old, the chivalrous, and the romantic which springs from a natural affinity. He dearly loved old English worthies, chroniclers, and poets, while knights and knightly deeds captivated his imagination and influenced his conduct. The "Introductions," written in admirably pure English, are fine specimens of a didactic narrative style, and, like everything the author wrote, almost every sentence discloses some feature of his mind or character. It will doubtless interest many to read again his last words to American boys, written at "Camp Robin," near Asheville, N. C., a few weeks before his departure: "He who waiks in the way these following ballads point will

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be manful in necessary fight, fair in trade, loyal in love, generous to the poor, tender in the household, prudent in living, plain in speech, merrily upon occasion, simple in behavior, and honest in all things. In this trust and this knowledge I now commend my young countrymen to 'The Boy's Percy.'"

Many other things, too, engaged his attention at this time. December 21, 1878, he writes, "I am in the midst of two essays on Anglo-Saxon poetry;" and then in a letter to a friend a few months before he died we see how he was employing his many-sided genius and manifold activities:

My lectures take all my time, and I cannot write you. I had not thought they would be so laborious, but I find the numerous illustrations of antique thought and habit require a great deal of research, and each lecture is a good week's work for a well man. And when I contemplate the other things I am waiting to do, many of them half done, to-wit: (1)

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my "Hymns of the Marshes," nearly complete, whereof you have the "Marshes of Glynn" and the little song of "Trees and the Master;" (2) my "Clover and Other Poems," now quite ready for the press; (3) my "Credo and Other Poems," a thick volume, all in memoranda, ready to be written out in a few weeks; (4) my "Choral Symphony," for chorus and orchestra, being my "Psalm of the West," with music; (5) my "Symphony Life," in four movements—first, childhood; second, youth; third, manhood; fourth, old age; (6) my "Symphony of the Plantation," being the old and the new life of the negro, in music; (8) my "Girl's Paston Letters," now in my desk, half prepared; (9) my "Boy's Monstrelet," also in desk ready to arrange; (10) my "Boy's Gesta Romanorum"—when I contemplate these, now lying upon my hands in actual forms of one sort or another, without daring to think of books merely projected, I fall to wondering whether I have any business or right to wait, whether I had not better go and borrow five thousand, ten thousand dollars—which could be so easily repaid in five years (the copyrights of the "Boy's Froissart" and "King Arthur" would have done it if I had not

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been obliged to sell them), and put myself in heaven at once, with nothing but poetry to write and two years of freedom from slavery to butcher and baker.

But at the time he was preparing these lectures and penning this letter he was being quickly consumed by the final fever, which, Dr. Ward informs us, set in in May, 1880. The following winter brought a hand to hand battle for life, and in December it was thought that he was at death's door. Nevertheless before April 1, 1881, he had delivered the twelve lectures—there were to have been twenty—which were later published under the title of "The English Novel." "A few of the earlier lectures," continues Dr. Ward, "he penned himself; the rest he was obliged to dictate to his wife. With the utmost care of himself, going in a closed carriage and sitting during his lecture, his strength was so exhausted that the struggle for breath in the carriage on his return seemed

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each time to threaten the end. Those who heard him listened with a sort of fascinated terror, as in doubt whether the hoarded breath would suffice to the end of the hour. It was in December of this winter, when too feeble to raise the food to his mouth, with a fever temperature of 104 degrees, that he penciled his last and greatest poem, 'Sunrise,' one of his projected series of the 'Hymns of the Marshes.' It seemed as if he were in fear that he would die with it unuttered."

Perhaps a little note on "Hamlet" which he left in his desk will throw some light on the cheerfulness and serenity with which he continued his work to the very last:

The grave scene is the most immense conception of all tragedy to me; it is the apparition of death upon a world which has not yet learned the meaning of life: how bleak it is, it is only skulls and regret; there is no comfort in it. But death, my God! it is the sweetest and dearest of all the angels to him who understands.

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After giving this course of lectures he rallied enough to go to New York to complete arrangements with his publisher for bringing out the remaining volumes of the Boy's series. But while there his illness became so aggravated that "his medical adviser pronounced tent life in a pure, high climate to be the last hope." His brother Clifford took him to Richmond Hill, three miles from Asheville, N. C., where his father and wife joined them, his own devoted wife having already taken her place as nurse by his bedside. No one can record the end in simpler or better-chosen words than Dr. Ward has done: "As the passing weeks brought no improvement to the sufferer, he started August 4 on a carriage journey across the mountains with his wife to test the climate of Lynn, Polk County, N. C. There deadly illness attacked him. No return was possible, and Clifford was summoned by telegraph, and

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assisted his father in removing the encampment to Lynn. Deceived by hope, and pressed by business cares, Clifford went home August 24, and the father and his wife five days later, expecting to return soon. Mrs. Lanier's own words, as written in the brief 'annals' of his life furnished me, will tell the end: 'We are left alone (August 29) with one another. On the last night of the summer comes a change. His love and immortal will hold off the destroyer of our summer yet one more week, until the forenoon of September 7, and then falls the frost, and that unfaltering will renders its supreme submission to the adored will of God.'” This was a life ideal in its simplicity, serenity, and purity, and inspiring in its heroic endeavor, lofty aspiration, and Christian faith. No mantle of charity had to be thrown over anything that Sidney Lanier ever said or did. And it is pleasing to know that as he lay

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awake in the weary watches of the night beautiful thoughts and poetic fancies were his blessed companions. By the kind permission of Mrs. Lanier I am permitted to give just here one of these—a little poem that has never been published before—"written in 'Camp Robin,' on the mountain side near Asheville, summer of 1881:—"

I was the earliest bird awake,
It was awhile before dawn, I believe,
But somehow I saw round the world,
And the eastern mountain top did not
hinder me.
And I knew of the dawn by my heart, not
by mine eyes.

After his heart was forever gladdened by a more glorious dawn the body was taken back to Baltimore and laid away in the Greenmount cemetery. In October the Faculty and students of Johns Hopkins University held a memorial service, but it would seem that only a few at that time were more than dimly

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conscious of their great loss. At any rate within a very few years, on February 3, 1888, a much larger and more appreciative gathering, drawn from many places, assembled in the same university to witness the unveiling and presentation of his bust, and to pay distinguished honor to his memory in addresses, in papers of critical appreciation, in readings from his poems, in poetical tributes and letters from leading American writers—all of which President Gilman published as a "Memorial of Sidney Lanier." For in this short time his two chief productions had appeared—"The English Novel," in 1883, and the "Poems," edited by his wife, in 1884. The latter was also accompanied by a "Memorial," written by Dr. William Hayes Ward, which has been of no little service in calling attention to the poet's manly struggle, beautiful life, and high achievement. And now that his life and his life work had been present-

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ed with at least partial completeness not a few finer minds and nobler natures were instinctively attracted to both, and many other articles, reviews and studies, have followed in quick succession. Of those in England one in the *Spectator* is deserving of special mention. A *replica* of the bust presented to the Johns Hopkins University, both gifts of his kinsman, Mr. Charles Lanier, was unveiled at the poet's birthplace October 17, 1890, and since 1895 "Select Poems of Sidney Lanier," a neat little volume carefully edited with introduction, notes, and bibliography, by Prof. Morgan Callaway, Jr., Ph.D., of the University of Texas, has greatly facilitated acquaintance with some of his finer poems. The Chautauquans, too, of the class of 1898 have called themselves "The Laniers," in honor of the poet and his brother, and there are many other indications of an increasing interest in his life and in his

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writings. This interest will doubtless be still more widely extended when the complete story is given to the world; for we have here the promise of a rich and interesting biography, and it is gratifying to learn that there is ample material for it—in the way of letters to and from friends, those to his wife being considered by some who have seen or heard them “superior to Shelley’s,” pencil jottings in notebooks, on billheads, on envelopes, on any bit of paper at hand, copious memoranda for poems, notes for lectures, besides the abundant revelations of himself in his writings. And no one is so worthily fitted or properly prepared for this undertaking as the poet’s wife, for, as Miss Mary E. Burt has aptly said,

Mrs. Lanier carries the poetic atmosphere, the ideal way of looking at things, the uplift of great association and rare good breeding not “teased by small mixed social claims,” wherever she goes. No

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poet's wife ever nursed his Muse so jealously, or after his death went on living his life out for him so faithfully. The genius of Sidney Lanier finds a secure, a charming, an intelligent continuance in his wife's interpretation of him.

The foundation of Lanier's superb equipment, it would seem, was music. This was his supreme nature-gift, his earliest passion, his abiding love. Music echoes through his books; music dominates his theories of poetry. "The 'imagery' of music—'notes' and 'tones' and 'melodies' and 'harmonies' and 'tone-colors'—is his natural language." Nor does he in the least misread himself when in 1873 he writes to a friend: "Whatever turn I may have for art is purely *musical*, poetry being with me *a mere tangent into which I shoot sometimes*." He lived in a concord of sweet sounds. A little fragment headed "The beauty of holiness: the holiness of beauty," left among his papers,

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gives a unique revelation of how essentially musical was his nature : "A holy tune was in my soul when I fell asleep ; it was going when I awoke. This melody is always moving along the background of my spirit. If I wish to compose, I abstract my attention from the thoughts which occupy the front of the stage, the *dramatis personæ* of the moment, and fix myself upon the deeper scene in the rear." The following letter, written to his wife from New York August 15, 1870, will perhaps give a faint conception of the joy of his soul while listening to the finest music :

Flutes and horns and violins, celestial sighs and breaths slow-drawn, penetrated with that heavenly woe which the deep heart knoweth when it findeth not room in the world for its too great love, and is worn with fasting for the beloved ; fine purity fiercely attacked by palpitating fascinations, and bracing herself and struggling and fighting therewith, till what is maidenly in a man is become all

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grimy and sweat-beaded like a warrior. Dear Love, shot by some small arrow and in pain with the wound thereof; divine lamentations, far-off blowings of great winds, flutterings of tree and flower leaves, and air troubled with wing beats of birds or spirits; floatings hither and thither of strange incenses and odors and essences; warm floods of sunlight, cool gleams of moonlight, faint enchantments of twilight, delirious dances, noble marches, processional chants, hymns of joy and of grief—ah [all these came to me] last night, in the first chair next to Thomas's Orchestra.

All this is clearly recognized in the beautiful tribute to his musical genius given by Asger Hamerik, his director for six years in the Peabody Symphony Orchestra in Baltimore :

To him as a child in his cradle music was given, the heavenly gift to feel and to express himself in tones. His human nature was like an enchanted instrument, a magic flute or the lyre of Apollo, needing but a breath or a touch to send its beauty out into the world. It was indeed irresistible that he should turn with

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those poetical feelings which transcend language to the penetrating gentleness of the flute, or the infinite passion of the violin; for there was an agreement, a spiritual correspondence between his nature and theirs, so that they mutually absorbed and expressed each other. In his hands the flute no longer remained a mere material instrument, but was transformed into a voice that set heavenly harmonies into vibration. Its tones developed colors, warmth, and a low sweetness of unspeakable poetry, they were not only true and pure, but poetic, allegoric as it were, suggestive of the depths and heights of being and of the delights which the earthly ear never hears and the earthly eye never sees. No doubt his firm faith in these lofty idealities gave him the power to present them to our imaginations, and thus by the aid of the higher language of music to inspire others with that sense of beauty in which he constantly dwelt. His conception of music was not reached by an analytic study of note by note, but was intuitive and spontaneous; like a woman's reason he felt it so because he felt it so, and his delicate perception required no more logical form of reasoning. His playing appealed alike to the musically learned

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and to the unlearned, for he would magnetize the listener; but the artist felt in his performance the superiority of the momentary living inspiration to all the rules and shifts of mere technical scholarship. His art was not only the art of art, but an art above art. I will never forget the impression he made on me when he played the flute concerta of Emil Hartmann at a Peabody Symphony concert in 1878—his tall, handsome, manly presence, his flute breathing noble sorrows, noble joys, the orchestra softly responding. The audience was spellbound. Such distinction, such refinement! He stood, the master, the genius!

In rare conjunction with this exquisite musical nature was the philosophic and scientific mind. Lanier, too, followed Solomon's direction, "Get learning, get understanding," recognizing that the road lay "through application, study, and thought." And he also belonged, as we have seen, to the modern world of scholarly research and scientific inquiry. He was, moreover, an inventor, a lover of the natural

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sciences, and his instincts and ambitions were of this nineteenth century. "Science," he observes, "instead of being the enemy of poetry, is its quartermaster and commissary." And to young poets he says: "You need not dream of winning the attention of sober people with your poetry unless that poetry and your soul behind it are informed and saturated with at least the largest final conceptions of current science." To comfort his wife in the period of his greatest uncertainty he had written: "Know, then, disappointments were inevitable, and will still come until I have fought the battle which every great artist has had to fight since time began. This—dimly felt while I was doubtful of my vocation and powers—is clear as the sun to me now that I *know*, through the fiercest tests of life, that I am in soul, and shall be in life and utterance, a great poet." "But," says Dante, "the best conceptions cannot be,

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save where science and genius are ;” and Lanier, believing this implicitly, held in reserve his powers of expression till he could formulate a scientific theory of the art of versification. He was confident of his own genius, but at the same time “possessed by the deepest conviction that the beauty of the art of poetry, like all other beauty, had its foundation in law.” He therefore proceeded to construct a comprehensive philosophy of formal and substantial beauty in literature—two parts of which appear in “The Science of English Verse” and “The English Novel,” the former dealing with the forms of poetic execution, the latter with the development of personality.

“The Science of English Verse” owes its origin to the conviction, expressed in a letter to Mr. Stedman; that “in all directions the poetic art was suffering from the shameful circumstance that criticism was with-

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out a scientific basis for even the most elementary of its judgments." Lanier's reasoning then seems to have been, as I gather more particularly from "The English Novel," thus—all accounts, scientific, religious, and historical, agree that the progress of things is *from* chaos or formlessness *to* form, then from one form to many, verse and prose for instance developing from the one-formed to the many-formed, that as all art is a congeries of forms each art must have its peculiar science, and always we have in a true sense the art of an art and the science of that art, hence the science of verse is no collection of rules for making verse, no more than Prof. Huxley's work on the crayfish is a cookery book. If one is disposed to say "*As for me, I would rather continue to write verse from pure instinct,*" as a valued friend who had won a considerable place in contemporary authorship expressed himself to La-

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nier, his answer was : " This fallacy—of supposing we do a thing by instinct simply because we *learned* to do it unsystematically and without formal teaching—seems a curious enough climax to the misconceptions of literary science."

In the preface to this work we get Lanier's other point of view : " If Puttenham in the sixteenth century could wish to make the art of poetry 'vulgar for all Englishmen's use,' such a desire in the nineteenth must needs become a religious aspiration. For under our new dispensation the preacher must soon be a poet, as were the preachers before him under the old. To reach an audience of a variety so prodigious as to range from the agnostic to the devotee no forms of less subtlety than those of tone can be effective. A certain wholly unconscious step already made in this direction by society gives a confirmation of fact to this view which perhaps no argument

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can strengthen: I mean the now common use of music as a religious art. Music already occupies one end of the Church; the same inward need will call poetry to the other." For in this poet's estimation poetry is not to be classified with placid indifference as polite literature, nor does the poet write to amuse. "That all worthy poets," he continues, "belong substantially to the school of David, that it is the poet's business to keep the line of men touching shoulders with each other, that the poet is in charge of all learning to convert it into wisdom, and that therefore a treatise on the poet's method is in its last result a sort of disciplinary preparation and *magister choralis* for the congregation as well as for the preacher of the future—these will not be regarded as merely visionary propositions, and perhaps will be here accepted at least as giving a final unity to the principles now to be set forth."

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The following short abstract taken from Prof. Charles W. Kent's excellent "Study of Lanier's Poems" will give a fair conception of his method:

Lanier in the "Science of English Versification," after discussing the four possible sound-relations, duration, intensity, pitch, and tone-color, shows that only three exact coördinations are possible—namely, duration, pitch, and tone-color, or their effects, rhythm, time, and color. He then points out that music and verse differ only in the means by which the coördination of rhythm, time, and tone-color are made—namely, in the case of music by *musical sounds*, and in the case of verse by *spoken words*. Rhythm is then discussed, the principle of accent as the basis of rhythm is discarded, and time is postulated and defended as the essential basis. This established, the quantity of a syllable, the grouping of sounds into bars as units of measure, and the broader grouping by phrases, by lines or meters, by stanzas and by poems, are treated fully. The phrase grouping may be effected in various ways—for instance, by logical pause, by alliteration, by logical accent, etc.

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The essential difference of Lanier's theory from that generally received is this: that rhythm in verse is precisely the same as rhythm in music, and that rhythm in music consists of exact time relations among sounds and silences. Hence the office of accent cannot begin until rhythm is established, and then its office is limited simply to grouping into bars. But both bars and accent are unessential to verse. Rhythmic pronunciation and logical accents must not be confounded. Using the musical notation, the author shows that bars contain a given number of notes of a fixed length. In making out the proper number of units of time, absence of time must be supplied by pauses of definite length. The bar may contain any number of units of time in theory, but practically, rhythm containing three units or three rhythm, and rhythm containing four units or four rhythm, are the ones occurring, and of these the three rhythm is by far the most popular in English.

Greater freedom, it is intended, should hereby be given to poetry, so that there may be no other limitations than the capacity of the human ear to comprehend or coör-

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dinate the grouping of the sounds. "There is certainly nothing more interesting in Lanier's book," says Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "than when he shows that just as a Southern negro will improvise on the banjo daring variations, such as would, if Haydn employed them, be called high art; so Shakespeare often employed the simplest devices of sound, such as are familiar in nursery songs, and produced effects which are lyrically indistinguishable from those of Mother Goose." After calling attention, then, to the prevalence and universal tacit recognition of tune in ordinary speech, Lanier adds:

Once we get a fair command of all these subtle resources of speech-tunes, once we have trained our ears to recognize and appreciate them properly, once we have learned to use them in combination with the larger rhythm, which are easily within the compass of our English tongue, what strides may we not take toward that goal, of the complete expres-

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sion of all the complex needs or hopes or despairs of modern life, which ever glitters through the clouds of commonplace before the eyes of the fervent artist!

But with Lanier there was no intention of allowing this liberty to go back into formlessness again. One of his latest utterances on this subject emphasizes his position. "Once for all remembering the dignity of form as we have traced it, remembering the relations of science as the knowledge of forms, of art as the creator of beautiful forms, of religion as the aspiration toward unknown forms and the unknown form-giver, let us abandon this unworthy attitude toward form, toward science, toward technic, in literary art, which has so long sapped our literary endeavor." Lanier died too young to give perfect expression to his scientific theories in beautiful poetic creations, though it must be granted that he was making marvelous progress toward the last. This is all the more necessary to keep in

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mind since Mr. Stedman has said that "Lanier's difficulties were explained by the very traits which made his genius unique. His musical faculty was compulsive. It inclined him to override Lessing's law of the distinctions of art and to essay in language feats that only the gamut can render possible."

In a recent letter, October 9, 1896, Mrs. Lanier says: "As Mr. Lanier's very first book has long been out of print, so for three years has been his latest one, 'The English Novel,' but under more hopeful conditions of recovery. Under that title were published the twelve lectures delivered in 1881 at Johns Hopkins University, a course named by the lecturer, 'From Æschylus to George Eliot, the Development of Personality.' The book-title has not conveyed the purpose of the lectures, for the novel was chosen only as the literary form in which the development of personality could best be

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studied in contrast to its crude and faint expression in the *Æschylean* drama. In a forthcoming revised edition the new sub-title will clearly indicate this purpose, while a great number of errors will be corrected. The publication of these lectures was urged in 1882 by friends who had listened to them. At the time, and for long afterwards, I was quite disabled and could exercise no discretion, and I followed the counsel of one who, after a too cursory examination, believed that they would need 'only careful proof reading.' My inexperience kept me from seeing that some editing was indispensable with an unrevised first draught of a work that had been shaped and penned in the feebleness of mortal illness; so it was committed to the generous care of a friend, without giving him liberty to lay any doubtful question before me during a long seclusion under rest 'treatment.' A multitude of mistakes ensued; some

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from the copyist's unfamiliarity with the handwriting and misunderstanding of the imperfect manuscript; others from the editor's uncertainties as to Mr. Lanier's final wish at various points. When these came to my notice the book was in circulation, with plates stereotyped, and the only complete remedy lay in new plates. After thirteen years this remedy is about to be applied, and the coming December, it is hoped, will see 'The English Novel' again in circulation. It will have new and better type, a full index, and paragraphs that were omitted in the earlier edition." "The Science of English Verse" may prove to be of more permanent value; but at present "The English Novel" is a far more interesting work not only to the general reader, but also to the student of literature. It has the rare value of being stimulating, suggestive, and helpful at the same time, though its higher worth is in

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the author's historical treatment of the development of personality, in his eloquent presentation of his theories of art and in much incidental interpretative and illuminating criticism. Prof. Morgan Callaway's synopsis, though brief, adequately presents the author's purpose. He says: "According to the author's statement the purpose of the book is, first, to inquire what is the special relation of the novel to the modern man, by virtue of which it has become a paramount literary form; and secondly, to illustrate this abstract inquiry, when completed, by some concrete readings in the greatest of modern English novelists." Addressing himself to the former, Lanier attempts to prove (1) that our time, when compared with that of Æschylus, shows an "enormous growth in the personality of man;" (2) that what we moderns call physical science, music, and the novel all had their origin at practically the

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same time, about the middle of the seventeenth century; and (3) "that the increase of personalities thus going on has brought about such complexities of relation that the older forms of expression were inadequate to them; and that the resulting necessity has developed the wonderfully free and elastic form of the modern novel out of the more rigid Greek drama, through the transition form of the Elizabethan drama." Then by way of illustration follows a detailed study of several of the novels of George Eliot, whom Lanier considered the greatest of English novelists.

Of vital interest, too, is Lanier's attitude to the effect of science upon the art of poetry and "art for art's sake." During his lifetime poetry was threatened with defeat by betrayal within her own household and with destruction from the strongly intrenched camp of modern science. It was more than in-

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timated in certain quarters that the poet, the novelist, and all imaginative literature, along with faith and a few other superfluous winged and mist-clad idealities, were to be abolished. How a mind "as truly philosophically and scientifically accurate as it was poetically sensuous and imaginative" would regard such an intimation is to be seen in this volume. After pointing out that while gravitation, oxygen, electromagnetism, the atomic theory, the spectroscope, the siren, are being evolved, the "Ode to St. Cecilia," the "Essay on Man," "Manfred," "A Man's a Man, for A' That," the "Ode on Immortality," "In Memoriam," the "Ode to a Nightingale," "The Psalm of Life" are being written, and after calling attention to Goethe, "at once pursuing science and poetry," he adds: "Now, if we examine the course and progress of this poetry, born thus within the very grasp and maw

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of this terrible science, it seems to me that we find—as to the *substance* of poetry—a steadily increasing confidence and joy in the mission of the poet, in the sacredness of faith and love and duty and friendship and marriage, and the sovereign fact of man's personality, while as to the *form* of the poetry we find that just as science has pruned our faith (to make it more faithful), so it has pruned our poetic form and technic, cutting away much unproductive wood and efflorescence and creating finer reserves and richer yields." There was no fear in his mind that science would ever find out the Almighty unto perfection or uncloak the mysteries of the universe. Yet, as with all serious, reflecting souls, when some of the latter obtruded their ghastly presence into the forefront of his observation, the former at times seemed to be far away, as the following unpublished fragment discloses: "In

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the lily, the sunset, the mountain, and the rosy hues of all life it is easy to trace God. But it is in the dust that goes up from the unending battle of things that we lose him. Forever through the ferocities of storms, the malice of the never-glutted oceans, the savagery of human wars, the inexorable barbarities of accident, of earthquake, and mysterious disease one hears the voice of man crying: '*Where art thou, my dear Lord and Master?*'"

In the quiet hours of meditation and of love the answer came to Lanier, as it comes to all those

Godly hearts, that, grails of gold,
Still the blood of faith do hold.

"I have a boy whose eyes are as blue as your Aëthra's," he writes to Paul H. Hayne. "Every day when my work is done I take him in my strong arms and lift him up and pore in his face. The intense repose, penetrated somehow with a thrilling mystery of *potential activ-*

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ity which dwells in his large, open eye, teaches me new things. I say to myself: 'Where are the strong arms in which I, too, might lay me and repose, and yet be full of the fire of life?' And always through the twilight come answers from the other world: 'Master! Master! there is one—Christ; in his arms we rest!'"

But his highest joy and deepest satisfaction in contemplating the "Crystal Christ" were attained through art. He was neither the agnostic nor the religionist. "The Church is too hot," he says in an unpublished fragment—"The Beauty of Holiness: the Holiness of Beauty"—"and Nothing is too cold. I find my proper temperature in art. Art offers to me a method of adoring the sweet Master, Jesus Christ, without the straitness of a creed which confines my genuflections and without the vacuity of doubt which numbs them. An unspeak-

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able gain has come to me in simply turning a certain phrase the other way. The beauty of holiness becomes a new and wonderful saying to me when I figure it to myself in reverse as the holiness of beauty. This is like opening a window of dark-stained glass and letting in a flood of white light. I thus keep upon the walls of my soul a church wall rubric which has been somewhat clouded by the expiring breaths of creeds dying their natural deaths. For in art there is no doubt. My heart beat all last night without my supervision, for I was asleep. My heart did not doubt a throb. I left it beating when I slept; I found it beating when I awoke. It is thus with art: it beats in my sleep. A holy tune was in my soul when I fell asleep; it was going when I awoke. This melody is always moving along in the background of my spirit."

In his soul, however, artistic beau-

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ty and moral beauty are twin stars that give a single light. "Let any sculptor," he says in this book, "hew out the most ravishing combination of tender curves and spheric softness that ever stood for woman; yet if the lip have a certain fullness that hints of the flesh, if the brow be insincere, if in the minutest particular the physical beauty suggests a moral ugliness, that sculptor—unless he be portraying a moral ugliness for a moral purpose—may as well give over his marble for paving stones. Time, whose judgments are inexorably moral, will not accept his work. For, indeed, we may say that he who has not yet perceived how artistic beauty and moral beauty are convergent lines which run back into a common ideal origin, and who is therefore not afire with moral beauty just as with artistic beauty; that he, in short, who has not come to that stage of quiet and eternal frenzy in which the beauty

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of holiness and the holiness of beauty mean one thing, burn as one fire, shine as one light within him, he is not yet the great artist."

Nay, he does not hesitate to inculcate a moral purpose nor lose sight of the higher fact that a man's words and deeds should be in harmony—a "perfect life in perfect labor writ," was his own ideal. "Cannot one say with authority to the young artist, whether working in stone, in color, in tones, or in character forms of the novel: so far from dreading that your moral purpose will interfere with your beautiful creation, go forward in the clear conviction that, unless you are suffused—soul and body, one might say—with that moral purpose which finds its largest expression in love—that is, the love of all things in their proper relation—unless you are suffused with this love, do not dare to meddle with beauty; unless you are suffused

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with beauty, do not dare to meddle with truth; unless you are suffused with truth, do not dare to meddle with goodness. In a word, unless you are suffused with truth, wisdom, goodness, and love, abandon the hope that the ages will accept you as an artist."

This little "note" for a Johns Hopkins lecture may be taken as his final word on this subject: "A man of mere cleverness can reach a certain point of progressive technic, but after that it is only moral nature which can carry him farther forward, which can teach him anything."

As a critic Lanier was more remarkable for penetration and apt characterization of particular authors than for range of sympathy and unerring judgment. He was often illuminative and interpretative, as when he says of William Morris: "He caught a crystal cupful of yellow light of sunset, and, persuading

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himself to deem it wine, drank it with a sort of smile." And when he comes to speak of Shelley he is even more felicitous: "In truth, Shelley appears always to have labored under an essential immaturity; it is very possible that if he had lived a hundred years he would never have become a man; he was penetrated with modern ideas, but penetrated as a boy would be—crudely, overmuch, and with a constant tendency to the extravagant and illogical, so that I call him the modern boy." He indicated with aptest words the weak places in Milton and Tennyson and Emerson. But his observation on Swinburne, "He invited me to eat; the service was silver and gold, but no food therein save pepper and salt," is not so happy; for, as the Spectator has pointed out, no one can say of "Atalanta in Calydon," or even of "Bothwell," that there is nothing in it but condiment. And, on the other hand, the

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service is by no means always of silver and gold, for the Swinburne verbiage is often so oppressive that the alloy presses itself on the attention a great deal more than the precious metal. The criticism on Thackeray is still wider of the mark. To speak of "the sub-acid satiric mood of Thackeray"—to stress it as a "mood of hate" and to say that "Thackeray and his school, when they speak of drawing a man as he is—of the natural, etc., in art—would mean drawing a man as he appears in such a history as the daily newspaper gives"—is to misread the tenderest heart and to misjudge the finest art of all the great English novelists. The reason why Lanier could not see that

If he smiled,
His smile had more of sadness than of
mirth,
But more of love than either,
was rather a matter of temperament
than of heart. Nor was there be-

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tween them that mental affinity which drew Lanier so strongly to George Eliot. Not only her philosophic and scientific mind appealed to him, but also her attitude toward life — weltanschauung — was congenial to his manner of thinking. This, it would seem, accounts for the position he has assigned her, as attaining the height thus far reached in fiction of subtle portrayal of human personality—in the following paragraph: “You will observe that of the two commandments in which the Master summed up all duty and happiness—namely, to love the Lord with all our heart and to love our neighbor as ourself—George Eliot’s whole life and work were devoted to the exposition of the latter. She has been blamed for devoting so little attention to the former. As for me, I am too heartily grateful for the stimulus of human love which radiates from all her works to feel any sense of lack or regret. This, after

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all—the general stimulus along the line of one's whole nature—is the only true benefit of contact with the great; more than this is hurtful. Nowadays you do not want an author to tell you how many times a day to pray, to prescribe how many inches wide shall be the hem of your garment. This the Master never did; too well he knew the growth of personality which *would* settle these matters, each for itself; too well he knew the subtle hurt of all such violations of modern individualism; and after our many glimpses of the heartiness with which George Eliot recognized the fact and function of human personality one may easily expect that she never attempted to teach the world with a rule and square, but desired only to embody in living form those prodigious generalizations in which the Master's philosophy, considered purely as philosophy, surely excelled all other systems. In fine, if

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I try to sum up the whole work of this great and beautiful spirit, which has just left us, in the light of all the various views I have presented in these lectures, where we have been tracing the growth of human personality from Æschylus, through Plato, Socrates, the contemporary Greek mind, through the Renaissance, Shakespeare, Richardson, Fielding, down to Dickens and our author. I find all the numerous threads of thought which have been put before you gathered into one if I say that George Eliot shows man what he may be in terms of what he is."

But the best and most trenchant of Lanier's criticisms is that on Walt Whitman, though his condemnation of the author of "Leaves of Grass" was not so sweeping as it appears in the first edition of "The English Novel." The following paragraph from his original manuscript, occurring between "democratic and formless" and "I need quote but a few

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scraps" (page 44, l. 6.) was omitted, but will find its proper place in the forthcoming edition :

But let me first carefully disclaim and condemn all that flippant and sneering tone which dominates so many discussions of Whitman. While I differ from him utterly as to every principle of artistic procedure; while he seems to me the most stupendously mistaken man in all history as to what constitutes true democracy and the true advance of art and man, while I am immeasurably shocked at the sweeping invasions of those reserves which depend on the very personality I have so much insisted upon, and which the whole consensus of the ages has considered more and more sacred with every year of growth in delicacy; yet, after all these prodigious allowances, I owe some keen delight to a certain combination of bigness and *naïveté* which make some of Whitman's passages so strong and taking; and indeed, on the one occasion when Whitman has abandoned his theory of formlessness and written in form, he has made "My Captain, O My Captain" surely one of the most tender and beautiful poems in any language.

But though Lanier elsewhere

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speaks of something in Whitman which refreshed him like harsh salt spray, he was not at all disposed to accept "a great new revolutionized democratic literature, which will wear a slouch hat and have its shirt open at the bosom, and generally riot in a complete independence of form." Our civilization has never presented a more striking contrast than in these two men. In dress, in physique, in choice of service during the war, in purity as expressed in their writings, in ideals of art, of manfulness, of "democracy" they were essentially unlike. Perhaps it required the instinct of a soldier, as well as the taste of a man of letters, to perceive this contrast as clearly and to present it as trenchantly as Col. T. W. Higginson has done. "There could be little in common," says he, "between the fleshliness of 'Leaves of Grass' and the refined chivalry that could write, in 'The Symphony,' lines like these :

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Shall ne'er prevail the woman's plea,
We maids would far, far whiter be
If that our eyes might sometimes see
Men maids in purity?

A man who, with pulmonary disease upon him, could still keep in his saddle as a soldier could feel but little sympathy with one who, with a superb physique prepared to serve in the hospital—honorable though that service might be for the feeble-bodied. One who viewed poetic structure as a matter of art could hardly sympathize with what he would regard as mere recitative; and one who chose his material and treatment with touch and discrimination could make no terms with one who was, as he said, 'poetry's butcher,' and offered as food only 'huge raw collops cut from the rump of poetry, and never mind gristle.'"

In regard to Whitman's declaration that "meanwhile democracy waits the coming of its bards in silence and in twilight—but 'tis the

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twilight of dawn"—evidently having himself in mind—Lanier answers: "Professing to be a mudsill and glorying in it, chanting democracy and the shirt sleeves and equal rights, declaring that he is nothing if not one of the people; nevertheless the people, the democracy, will yet have nothing to do with him, and it is safe to say that his sole audience has lain among such representatives of the highest culture as Emerson and the English *illuminated*. The truth is, that if closely examined, Whitman, instead of being a true democrat, is simply the most incorrigible of aristocrats masking in a peasant's costume; and his poetry, instead of being the natural outcome of a fresh young democracy, is a product which would be impossible except in a highly civilized society." Lanier has no patience with Whitman's standard of "democracy." "As near as I can make it out," he writes, "Whitman's

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argument seems to be that, because a prairie is wide, therefore debauchery is admirable, and because the Mississippi is long, therefore every American is God." Over against Whitman's "roughs" he sets "George Washington, that beautiful, broad, tranquil spirit," "our courtly and philosophic Thomas Jefferson," "the Adamses and Benjamin Franklin," "William Cullen Bryant (that surely unrugged and graceful figure who was so often called the finest American gentleman) and Lowell and Longfellow;" and in contrast with Whitman's "rude muscle," "brawn" and "sinew of the Western backwoodsman" as the ideal of strength, he presents this exquisite picture: "I know—and count it among the privileges of my life that I do—a woman who has spent her whole life in bed for twenty years past, confined by a curious form of spinal disease, which prevents locomotion, and which, in

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spite of constant pain and disturbance, leaves the system long unworn. Day by day she lies helpless, at the mercy of all those tyrannical small needs which become so large under such circumstances; every meal must be brought to her, a drink of water must be handed; and she is not rich to command service. Withal her nature is of the brightest and most energetic sort. Yet surrounded by these unspeakable pettinesses, inclosed in this cage of contradictions, the woman has made herself the center of an adoring circle of the brightest people; her room is called 'Sunnyside;' when brawny men are tired they go to her for rest, when people in the rudest physical health are sick of life they go to her for the curative virtue of her smiles. Now this woman has not so much rude muscle in her whole body as Whitman's man has in his little finger; she is so fragile that long ago some one

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called her 'White Flower,' and by this name she is much known; it costs her as much labor to press a friend's hand as it costs Whitman's rough to fell a tree; regarded from the point of view of brawn and sinew, she is simply absurd; yet to the eye of my spirit there is more manfulness in one moment of her loving and self-sacrificing existence than in an eon of muscle-growth and sinew-breeding; and hers is the manfulness which is the only solution of a true democrat, hers is the manfulness of which only can a republic be built. A republic is the government of the spirit; a republic depends upon the self-control of each member; you cannot make a republic out of muscles and prairies and Rocky Mountains; republics are made of the spirit."

A mere glance at Sidney Lanier's prose serves to show that he was "a man of genius with a rare gift for the happy word." But our

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chief interest in him arises from his determination to "be in life and utterance a great poet." His life was a beautiful and inspiring poem. Was he also as a worker in the sphere of imagination and in the realm of beauty the artist—in conception and in expression the poet? Were his scientific attainments and philosophic power used to enhance and ennoble his poetic gifts, or to mar and embarrass them? Did he possess the supreme gift? For the genuine lover of poetry is firmly persuaded that no profundity, no learning can give beauty to verses that lack the divine fire. No poet in the last forty years has so puzzled the critics. Superficial as well as essential resemblances have been abundantly suggested. Lanier has been likened in moral earnestness and loftiness of purpose to Milton, in intellectuality to Emerson, in spirituality to Ruskin, in love of nature to Wordsworth, in taste, sensibility, and ex-

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quisite sense of beauty to Shelley and Keats, in technique to Tennyson, in the astonishing manipulation of his meter and cadence and involution to Swinburne. But these comparisons, especially in their cumulative effect, are deceptive and misleading, though they serve to show, coming as they do from so many sources, that he is an original and individual singer with many rare and attractive qualities.

In his "Poems" three stages of development are discernible. In the earlier portion of his life, before 1874, music seems to have satisfied his deepest longings and highest aspirations, and in music his genius found easiest and most natural expression. As poetry was only a tangent into which he shot sometimes, there is a perceptible intellectual effort, as of one singing from the head and not out of the heart, which resulted in rigid, if not labored, movement and over-

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wrought fancy. There is, at any rate, a lack of that ease and spontaneity which was his musical birth-right, and which belongs to the poets who lisp in numbers. Of this earlier period three poems rise distinctly above all his other efforts—two songs for “The Jacquerie,” that of the hound and the “Betrayal,” and “The Ship of Earth,” though there are beautiful stanzas here and there in others, two in “Life and Song” being specially fine. In the first song, an allegory intended to represent the essence of the French revolutionary spirit growing out of the desperate misery and the brute force of mediæval times, though the art is more plastic than in most of his earlier verse, the fancy is plainly constrained :

The hound was cuffed, the hound was
kicked,
O' the ears was cropped, o' the tail was
nicked,

Oo-hoo-o, howled the hound.
The hound into his kennel crept;

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He rarely wept, he never slept.
His mouth he always open kept,
Licking his bitter wound,
The hound,
U-lu-lo, howled the hound.

A star upon his kennel shone
That showed the hound a meat-bare bone.
O hungry was the hound!
The hound had but a churlish wit.
He seized the bone, he crunched, he bit.
"An thou wert Master, I had slit
Thy throat with a huge wound."
Quo' hound,
O, angry was the hound.

The star in castle-window shone,
The Master lay abed, alone.
O ho, why not? quo' hound.
He leapt, he seized the throat, he tore
The Master, head from neck, to floor,
And rolled the head i' the kennel door,
And fled and salved his wound.
Good hound!
U-lu-lo, howled the hound.

In the "Betrayal" he is freer,
more natural, and his fancy is less
violent—more chastened, as befits
the theme. In simplicity, direct-
ness, reserved force it is strong,
though somehow it lacks the melody

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and pathos, as well as that human touch which goes straight to the heart in "The Bridge of Sighs."

The sun has kissed the violet sea,
And burned the violet to a rose.
O sea! would thou not better be
Mere violet still? Who knows? who
knows?

Well hides the violet in the wood:
The dead leaf wrinkles her a hood,
And winter's ill is violet's good;
But the bold glory of the rose,
It quickly comes and quickly goes—
Red petals whirling in white snows,
Ah me!

The sun has burnt the rose-red sea:
The rose is turned to ashes gray.
O sea, O sea, mightst thou but be
The violet thou hast been to-day!
The sun is brave, the sun is bright,
The sun is lord of love and light;
But after him it cometh night.
Dim anguish of the lonesome dark!—
Once a girl's body, stiff and stark,
Was laid in a tomb without a mark,
Ah me!

"The Ship of Earth" is perhaps
not so perfect as either of the songs;
it may give evidence of the straining

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ambition of youth ; and yet it is the most powerful description of a young man's terror of life, in the "storm and stress" period, I remember to have seen. It suggests two strong and rugged poets, Whitman and Browning, though Lanier's was a masterful nature, too, for all its purity and love of beauty :

Thou Ship of Earth, with Death, and
Birth, and Life, and Sex aboard,
And fires of Desires burning hotly in
the hold,
I fear thee, O! I fear thee, for I hear the
tongue and sword
At battle on the deck, and the wild
mutineers are bold!

The dewdrop morn may fall from off the
petal of the sky,
But all the deck is wet with blood and
stains the crystal red.
A pilot, God, a pilot! for the helm is left
awry,
And the best sailors in the Ship lie
there among the dead!

But Lanier's was a strong and
affluent nature, only less richly en-

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dowed with poetic than with musical gifts, and shortly after his removal to Baltimore he began to evince a greater mastery of the poetic art. There was observable a quick and positive gain both in poetic conception and expression. "Industrious and select reading, steady observation and insight into all seemingly and generous acts and affairs," strengthened doubtless "by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge," greatly enlarged the man and fortified his resolution. Using yet the methods of the older poets, he enriched our literature with such genuine, original, and individual poems as "My Springs," "The Song of the Chattahoochee," "The Revenge of Hamish," "A Ballad of the Trees and the Master," "The Stirrup Cup," "Tampa Robins," etc., and the delightful sonnets, "The Mocking Bird," "Laus Mariæ," "A Harlequin of

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Dreams," etc. Seldom did he produce so perfect a piece of work as "The Song of the Chattahoochee." In "My Springs," which is altogether a finer poem, "there is here and there a hint of the desire to say in a striking way what would best have been said in a subdued way," as the *Spectator* has said; "and again we cannot say that we like at all the

high glory-loves

And science-loves and story-loves.

But nothing could be more perfect than

the whole sweet round

Of little things that large life compound;

and the touch of wonder in the last two lines of the poem is as simple and exquisite as any touch of tenderness in our literature."

But simpler and more spontaneous is the "Song of the Chattahoochee," with its descriptive beauty and on-swaying rush, and highly

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musical withal—not with the baby-bustle of the eager little brook which chatters, chatters as it flows to join the brimming river, but with the more stately harmony of the manly river which is fain for to water the plain, to toil and to be mixed with main. Popular ballads, it is true, rarely touch the highest point of poetic achievement, but their very freedom and directness, the way in which they can be called up at will by the lively imagination of people not given to meditation and introspection, compensate for all a more elaborate art can supply, though no one can complain of a lack of art in this bewitching stream-song :

Out of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and reach the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side

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With a lover's pain to attain the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall.

All down the hills of Habersham,
All through the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried *Abide, abide,*
The willful water weeds held me thrall,
The loving laurel turned my tide,
The ferns and the fondling grass said,
Stay,
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds cried *Abide, abide,*
Here in the hills of Habersham,
Here in the valleys of Hall.

.
But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of duty call—
Downward to toil and be mixed with the
main,
The dry fields burn, and the mills are to
turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
And the lordly main from beyond the
plain
Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall.

The mystical yearning and sense

Sidney Lanier.

of duty in this poetic interpretation of the voices of nature are intensified to a mystic exaltation of the power of poetic sympathy in "The Ballad of the Trees and the Master: "

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to
 him,
The little gray leaves were kind to him:
The thorn tree had a mind to him,
 When into the woods he came.

Out of the woods my master went,
And he was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When death and shame would woo him
 last,
From under the trees they drew him—
 last:
'Twas on a tree they slew him—last
 When out of the woods he came.

Lanier is a versatile poet in both manner and thought, and likes to

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give variety to his song. His originality does not bind him to one idea or to one form. Now he uses nice observation, curious questioning, and quaint comparison in the neat sonnet on "The Mocking Bird :"

Superb and sole, upon a plumed spray
That o'er the general leafage boldly
grew,
He summed the woods in song; or typic
drew
The watch of hungry hawks, the lone
dismay
Of languid doves when long their lovers
stray,
And all birds' passion-plays that sprinkle
dew
At morn in brake or bosky avenue.
Whate'er birds did or dreamed, this bird
could say.
Then down he shot, bounced airily along
The sward, twitched in a grasshopper,
made song
Midflight, perched, prinked, and to his
art again.
Sweet Science, this large riddle read me
plain:
How may the death of that dull insect be

Sidney Lanier.

**The life of yon trim Shakspeare on the
tree?**

Then again in the same verse form
he gives his luxuriant fancy freer
play and takes us into the higher re-
gion of the imagination in "The
Harlequin of Dreams : "

Swift, through some trap mine eyes
have never found,
Dim-paneled in the painted scene of
Sleep,
Thou, giant Harlequin of Dreams, dost
leap
Upon my spirit's stage. Then Sight and
Sound,
Then Space and Time, then Language,
Metre and Bound,
And all familiar Forms that firmly keep
Man's reason in the road, change faces,
peep
Betwixt the legs and mock the daily
round.
Yet thou canst more than mock: some-
times my tears
At midnight break through bounden
lids—a sign
Thou hast a heart: and oft thy little
heaven

Sidney Lanier.

Of dream-taught wisdom works me bettered years.

In one night witch, saint, trickster, fool divine,

I think thou'rt jester at the Court of Heaven.

In the third stage of Lanier's poetical development, however, the most distinctive features of his art and gifts are presented. According to his own theories were written those poems in which he gave the best exhibition of his melody, strength, and personal flavor, and the highest manifestation of his passion, power, and originality. In these his luxuriant fancy has freest range; his love of nature is most poetically displayed. In these later poems we may, it is true, still chance upon a line fashioned after Poe and observe a manner imitated from Browning, for not even "dearest Keats," it would seem, exercised such an influence upon him as these; yet no other poet ever wrote a series

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of poems like "Corn," "Clover," "The Bee," "Remonstrance," "The Crystal," "The Symphony," "Individuality," "Sunset," "The Marshes of Glynn," and "Sunrise." In merit most unequal, in peculiarities most marked, they are nevertheless distinctive, and they are poetry, surely the rarest product of English or American literature during the last quarter of a century. After all it is to this body of verse we must turn for the completest interpretation of Lanier's ideas of the poet, of personality, of life, nature, love, God. If it be asked, "What profit e'er a poet brings?" he answers in "The Bee: "

He beareth starry stuff about his wings
To pollen thee and sting thee fertile:

.

for oft these pollens be
Fine dust from wars that poets wage for
thee.

Or, if the question be, "A poet,
thou; what worth, what worth, the

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whole of all thine art?" we learn
from "Clover:"

The artist's market is the heart of man,
The artist's price, some little good of man.

In "Corn," one tall corn-captain
types

The post-soul sublime
That leads the vanward of his timid time
And sings up cowards with commanding
rhyme;

addressing whom he sings :

Thou lift'st more stature than a mortal
man's
Yet ever piercest downward in the mold
And keepest hold
Upon the reverend and steadfast earth
That gave thee birth;
Yea, standest smiling in thy future grave,
Serene and brave,
With unremitting breath
Inhaling life from death,
Thine epitaph writ fair in fruitage elo-
quent,
Thyself thy monument.

As poets should
Thou hast built up thy hardihood
With universal food,

Sidney Lanier.

Drawn in select proportion fair
From honest mold and vagabond air;
From darkness of the dreadful night,
And joyful light;
From antique ashes, whose departed
flame
In thee has finer life and longer fame;
From wounds and balms,
From storms and calms,
From potsherds and dry bones
And ruin-stones.
Into thy vigorous substance thou hast
wrought
Whate'er the hand of Circumstance hath
brought;
Yea, into cool solacing green hast
spun
White radiance hot from out the sun.
So thou dost mutually leaven
Strength of earth with grace of heaven;
So thou dost marry new and old
Into a one of higher mold;
So thou dost reconcile the hot and cold,
The dark and bright,
And many a perplexing opposite,
And so,
Akin by blood to high and low,
Fittingly thou playest out thy poet's part,
Richly expending thy much-bruised
heart

Sidney Lanier.

In equal care to nourish lord in hall
Or beast in stall:
Thou took'st from all that thou mightest
give to all.

The author of this conception of
a poet therefore very naturally con-
siders all the questions of the hour
and ponders the problems of the day.
To the old hill of his native state,
worn out, abandoned, he exclaims
with prophetic voice in "Corn :"

Thou gashed and hairy Lear
Whom the divine Cordelia of the year,
E'en pitying Spring, will vainly strive to
cheer—

.
Yet shall the great God turn thy fate,
And bring thee back into thy monarch
state
And majesty immaculate.

Against unbelief and all half-be-
liefs he protests in "Acknowledg-
ment," and "Remonstrance" con-
tains his fierce denunciation against
bigotry and intolerance, concluding
with :

Sidney Lanier.

Opinion, damned intriguer, gray with
gulle,

Let me alone!

The cold, metallic spirit of money-
getting—with its paralyzing effect
upon all the finer instincts and no-
bler passions of the soul, with its
destructive consequences to the
saint's faith, the artist's love of
beauty, and the poet's high imagin-
ings, and its accompanying degra-
dation of the poor—afflicted him
still more deeply. In the "Sym-
phony" he cries out:

O Trade! O Trade! would thou wert
dead!

The time needs heart—'tis tired of head:
and the song of the poor,

Wedged by the pressing of Trade's hand,
is eloquent with melodious heart-
throbs:

We weave in the mills and heave in the
kilns,

We sieve mine-meshes under the hills,
And thief much gold from the devil's
bank tills

Sidney Lanier.

To relieve, O God, what manner of ills?
The beasts, they hunger, and eat, and die;
And so do we, and the world's a sty;
Hush, fellow-swine: why nuzzle and
cry?

*Swinehood hath no remedy,
Say many men, and hasten by,
Clamping the nose and blinking the eye.
But who said once, in the lordly tone,
Man shall not live by bread alone,
But all that cometh from the Throne?*

Hath God said so?

But Trade saith, *No*:

And the kilns and the curt-tongued mills
say, *Go*:

*There's plenty that can, if you can't, we
know.*

Move out, if you think you're underpaid.

The poor are prolific, we're not afraid:

Trade is trade.

Alas, for the poor to have some part
In yon sweet living lands of art,
Makes problems not for head, but heart.
Vainly might Plato's head revolve it:
Plainly the heart of a child could solve it.

Love alone, then, can cure the
ills that flesh is heir to, can solve
the difficulties arising from so many
sources, and Lanier uses every note

Sidney Lanier.

in his gamut in sounding love's
praises :

Music is love in search of a word.

And in an ecstasy of love he ex-
claims :

O, sweet my pretty sum of history,
I leapt the breadth of time in loving
thee!

For "music means harmony, har-
mony means love, and love means—
God."

I would thou left'st me free to live with
love

And faith, that through the love of
love doth find

My Lord's dear presence in the stars
above,

The clods below, the flesh without, the
mind

Within, the bread, the tear, the smile.

His view of life may then be given
in one line :

When life's all love, 'tis life : aught else,
'tis naught.

To the lover of nature Lanier
gives the keenest delight and sub-

Sidney Lanier.

tlest pleasure. The poet has achieved the triumph of sharing with others that "inward thrill in the air, or in the sunshine, one knows not which, half like the thrill of the passion of love, half like the thrill of the passion of friendship" which he experienced on a "divine day." "Do you like, as I do," he asks Paul H. Hayne, "on such a day to go out into the sunlight and *stop thinking?* —lie fallow, like a field, and absorb those certain liberal potentialities which will in after days reappear, duly formulated, duly grown, duly perfected, as poems?" Knowledge of facts and sensibility to charms, we have been told, are the two elements in a perfectly poetical appreciation of nature, and Lanier possessed both to an eminent degree. In his communion with nature mind and soul seemed to be divested of their outer garment, so delicate was his organism, so observant was he of minutest particulars, so exqui-

Sidney Lanier.

sitely attuned was his ear. His knowledge of nature was that of a friend and lover, who was at the same time a naturalist. But unlike Wordsworth, from whose "noblest utterances man is absent," says Lowell, "except as the antithesis that gives a sharper emphasis to nature," man is everywhere the central figure or controlling influence in Lanier's most beautiful nature poems. His personifications, always bold, are often powerful, though the affectations, "cousin Clover," "cousin Cloud," "sweet-heart leaves," have been greatly overpraised. The tense imagination observable here and there also mars their beauty and power. But his infinite tenderness, pliancy of fancy, and susceptibility to nature's charms were happily combined with the power of transporting us into the midst of the "gospeling glooms," into the very presence of the marsh and the sea. With him we can catch

Sidney Lanier.

The wood smells that swiftly but now
brought breath
From the heaven-side bank of the river
of death;

and we can feel that

The slant yellow beam down the wood
aisle doth seem
Like a lane into heaven that leads from
a dream.

He teaches us "to company with
large, amiable trees," and

To loiter down lone alleys of delight,
And hear the beating of the hearts of
trees,
And think the thoughts that lilies speak
in white
By greenwood pools and pleasant pas-
sages.

And in his company, too, we may
experience the various ministrations
of nature,

For love, the dear wood's sympathies,
For grief, the wise wood's peace.

Nature affects him like music :

Shaken with happiness:
The gates of sleep stood wide.

Sidney Lanier.

For, as the opening lines of "Sunrise" inform us,

In my sleep I was fain of their fellowship,
fain
Of the live oaks, the marsh, and the main.
The little green leaves would not let me
alone in my sleep.

An oft-quoted touch of tenderness
and fancy is taken from "Corn:"

The leaves that wave against my cheek
caress

Like women's hands; the embracing
bows express

A subtlety of mighty tenderness;
The copse depths into little noises start,
That sound anon like beatings of a heart,
Anon like talk 'twixt lips not far apart.

The "Hymns of the Marshes" afford abundant examples of his larger, more thoughtful manner. Peculiarly characteristic of his tolerant, worshipful nature is this:

Oh, what is abroad in the marsh and the
terminal sea?

Somehow my soul seems suddenly free
From the weighing of fate and the sad
discussion of sin,

Sidney Lanier.

By the length and the breadth and the
sweep of the marshes of Glynn.

Ye marshes, how candid and simple and
nothing-withholding and free

Ye publish yourselves to the sky and
offer yourselves to the sea!

Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and
the rains and the sun,

Ye spread and span like the catholic man
who hath mightily won

God out of knowledge and good out of
infinite pain

And sight out of blindness and purity out
of stain.

As the marsh hen secretly builds on the
watery sod,

Behold, I will build me a nest on the
greatness of God:

I will fly in the greatness of God as the
marsh hen flies

In the freedom that fills all the space
'twixt the marsh and the skies:

By so many roots as the marsh grass
sends in the sod,

I will heartily lay me a-hold on the
greatness of God:

O, like to the greatness of God is the
greatness within

The range of the marshes, the liberal
marshes of Glynn.

Sidney Lanier.

Lanier's poetry appeals rather to meditative minds than to those delighting in pictorial effects. "The Song of the Chattahoochee" is characteristically less picturesque than "The Brook." But in "Sunrise" Lanier presents a picture of remarkable brilliance and fascination, though it does seem "to stand on tiptoe here and there with the desire to express the inexpressible."

Oh, what if a sound should be made!
Oh, what if a bound should be laid
To this bow-and-spring tension of beauty
and silence a-spring—
To the bend of beauty the bow, or the
hold of silence the string!
I fear me, I fear me yon dome of diaph-
anous gleam
Will break as a bubble o'erblown in a
dream—
Yon dome of too-tenuous tissues of space
and of night.
Overweighted with stars, overfreighted
with light,
Oversated with beauty and silence, will
seem
But a bubble that broke in a dream,

Sidney Lanier.

If a bound of degree to this grace be
laid,

Or a sound or a motion made.

But no: it is made: list! Somewhere—
mystery, where?

In the leaves? in the air?

In my heart? is a motion made:

'Tis a motion of dawn, like a flicker of
shade on shade.

In the leaves 'tis palpable: low multitudi-
nous stirring

Upwinds through the woods; the little
ones, softly conferring,

Have settled my lord's to be looked for;
so; they are still;

But the air and my heart and the earth
are a-thrill—

And look where the wild duck sails round
the bend of the river—

And look where a passionate shiver

Expectant is bending the blades

Of the marsh grass in serial shimmers
and shades—

And invisible wings, fast fleeting, fast
fleeting,

Are beating

The dark overhead as my heart beats—
and steady and free

Is the ebb tide flowing from marsh to sea—
(Run home, little streams,

Sidney Lanier.

With your lapfuls of stars and
dreams)—
And a sailor unseen is hoisting a-peak,
For list, down the inshore curve of the
creek
How merrily flutters the sail—
And lo! in the East! Will the East un-
veil?
The East is unveiled, the East hath con-
fessed
A flush: 'tis dead; 'tis alive; 'tis dead ere
the West
Was aware of it: nay, 'tis abiding, 'tis
unwithdrawn:
Have a care, sweet Heaven! 'Tis Dawn!
Lanier felt in his innermost heart
that—

How dark, how dark soever the race that
must needs be run,
I am lit with the sun.

With enkindled gaze and calmly
unafraid he therefore sings his life
song on the very brink of the grave:

Oh, never the mast-high run of the seas
Of traffic shall hide thee,
Never the hell-covered smoke of the fac-
tories
Hide thee,

Sidney Lanier.

Never the reek of the time's fen-politics
 Hide thee,
And ever my heart through the night
 shall with knowledge abide thee,
And ever by day shall my spirit, as one
 that hath tried thee,
Labor, at leisure, in art—till yonder be-
 side thee
My soul shall float, friend Sun,
The day being done.

